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**ALARMING INCIDENTS OF  
WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE  
MILITARY—HOW TO STOP IT?**

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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## **ALARMING INCIDENTS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE MILITARY—HOW TO STOP IT?**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL,  
*Washington, DC, Tuesday, February 11, 2020.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:35 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jackie Speier (chairwoman of the subcommittee) presiding.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACKIE SPEIER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Ms. SPEIER. The Military Personnel Subcommittee will come to order. The hearing today is to discuss a very important issue and one that hopefully we will get some important answers to.

This issue could not be more urgent. Three weeks ago, a New York Times article revealed that the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] had arrested seven members of an organization called The Base, a dangerous White supremacist group.

They aren't your parents' neo-Nazis. The Base is an accelerationist, paganistic, anarchic group whose name speaks to the admiration for al-Qaida and ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. They hate Jews and African Americans, but they don't like President Trump or the United States either. Their goal is to use terrorism to start a race war and collapse the United States.

Triggering societal collapse may be a sick fantasy, but the reality is that domestic terror has claimed more lives than international terror since 9/11.

Last week, FBI Director Wray told the Judiciary Committee that he had, quote, "elevated racially motivated violent extremism to a national threat priority at the same band with homegrown violent extremism and ISIS," unquote.

Our enemies, especially Russia, exploit these racial tensions to divide and weaken American society. The head of The Base lives in Russia. Russia likely supports White supremacist groups in the United States and Europe, and Russia targets our service members with disinformation.

When our enemies take advantage of our vulnerabilities, our national security is threatened and dependent on a sufficient response.

The threat also has specific implications for the Personnel Subcommittee.

First, White supremacist terror groups and communities value military skills that would enable them to commit terrorism or fight

a race war. They recruit vets to join and train their members, seek to infiltrate sympathizers into the military, and many members claim to have military experience. This doesn't make White supremacist terror groups unique. Al-Qaida also recruited members of the Egyptian and Saudi militaries.

Second, there are several warning signs that individuals with White nationalist and supremacist tendencies are, in fact, serving in our military. Recent high-profile examples include a Marine attending the 2017 Charlottesville rally, a Coast Guard officer arrested with a cache of weapons, and a West Point grad espousing hate on social media.

Last week, a Military Times survey showed that the number of troops who have witnessed evidence of White supremacist and racial ideologies in the military increased from 22 to 36 percent from 2018 to 2019.

Like in previous decades, as supremacist activities, marked by events such as Charlottesville, have increased in recent years, it has likely increased in the military as well. And supremacists in the military put service members' safety, recruitment, and retention at risk.

Third, I am concerned that the military doesn't take this threat seriously enough, have the tools it needs, or dedicates sufficient resources to the threat.

Our accessions and vetting enterprise lumps White supremacist activity in with gang affiliation rather than treat it as a national security issue on par with foreign terror. That lack of urgency and focus trickles down to commanders and enlisted leaders, who don't appear to be sufficiently apprised of this threat or taught how to deal with it.

Even if they are dealing with it, the military lacks statistics to prove it, in part because of the absence of a standalone UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] extremism article. This raises hard questions about whether military law enforcement needs additional authorities to combat this terror threat.

Today we will be joined by two panels. The first will consist of experts from organizations that study, track, and educate on extremism. On the second, we will have DOD [Department of Defense] officials responsible for the accessions policy for the military, counterintelligence, law enforcement, and security, and the military criminal investigations agencies.

I would like to focus on three main concerns today.

First, what is the scope and magnitude of this threat, and what are its impacts?

Second, what is being done to prevent these individuals from entering the military and then find, investigate, and prosecute them? Do military leaders take this issue seriously enough? Some of the testimony will suggest that many of them are just administratively discharged; nothing further is done about them. That is inconsistent with our need to make sure that the country is secure as well.

Third, what additional tools might we need to give the military to combat this threat?

Before I introduce the first panel, let me have Ranking Member Kelly have his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Speier can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. TRENT KELLY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSISSIPPI, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL**

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Chairwoman Speier.

I wish to welcome both of our panels to today's hearing.

I have dealt with White supremacy on the front lines as a district attorney. From murders to rapes, to assault, to intimidation, to officer shootings, I have dealt with all those things in my district in Mississippi during my time as a prosecutor and a district attorney there.

But I have also served in the military for 34 years. No group is more diverse or culturally integrated than our United States military—none, anywhere. We must keep it that way. It should be a cultural site where people can go to know what right looks like. And we have to keep it that way, which means this is an important hearing to make sure that we keep us at the basis that we are.

I think extremist activities of any kind are unacceptable and cannot be tolerated in the military. They cut to the very core of what the military was founded on: good order and discipline. George Washington once wrote, "Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable, procures success to the weak and esteem to all."

The thought of extremist activities like White supremacy pervading the military is in direct contrast to the foundation of what the military stands for. As a former brigade commander and a battalion commander in combat, I can tell you from experience that soldiers must and do trust each other with their lives, regardless of their backgrounds or the colors of their skin. Service members are judged based on their ability to perform their job and the content of their character, and any other distinctions have no place in the military or in society.

I am interested in understanding the true magnitude of these issues from today's witnesses. As I was preparing for this hearing, I realized we don't have a lot of reliable data on this. Aside from a recent newspaper poll on racist behavior in the military, we have few solid statistics on extremist behavior in the military.

The definitive data we do have comes from the Department of Defense, where there have been 21 criminal cases involving White supremacy over the last 5 years amongst all four services and components. DOD is now tracking investigations into White supremacy, as well as other extremist activities, and sharing this information with the FBI.

This is a step in the right direction on the law enforcement side, but I think data is a huge key to unpacking the issue. We need to define the problem and get reliable data on how prevalent it is in the military.

On panel one, I would like to understand the magnitude of extremist and White supremacy activities all across society and what data is being tracked outside of the military. I am also interested in your recommendations specifically as they pertain to training and data collection for the military.

On panel two, I would like to hear about the Department's screening processes and the ongoing monitoring of extremist activities. My understanding is there may be a gap in the reporting of the noncriminal cases that have been handled administratively by commanders that resulted in an administrative discharge. I would like to understand DOD's way forward on this issue and whether we also need to have standardized training across the services.

I want to thank our witnesses and our chairwoman for being here today. Thank you, and I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Ranking Member Kelly.

Thank you, witnesses, for joining us today. You will have 5 minutes to present your testimony.

I would also like to ask unanimous consent that non-committee members be allowed to participate and ask questions after all the committee members have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Without objection?

Mr. KELLY. Without objection.

Ms. SPEIER. So ordered.

Okay. Our first panel starts with Dr. Heidi Beirich, co-founder and chief strategy officer of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism; Dr. Mark Pitcavage, senior research fellow at the Center on Extremism at the Anti-Defamation League; and Ms. Lecia Brooks, chief workplace transformation officer at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

We will take a short recess and switch out to our second panel at the end of the first panel.

So would you like to begin?

**STATEMENT OF HEIDI L. BEIRICH, PH.D., CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, GLOBAL PROJECT AGAINST HATE AND EXTREMISM**

Dr. BEIRICH. Yes. I would like to thank the esteemed members of the subcommittee for inviting me to testify today. It is a great honor.

My name is Heidi Beirich. I have a Ph.D. in political science from Purdue University, and I am the co-founder of the newly established Global Project Against Hate and Extremism.

For the last two decades, I have researched extremist activity in the United States and monitored White supremacists in the military, often forwarding that information to military investigators. I also argued, as I will today, for more vigilant practices and stronger policies to root out extremists from the ranks.

Nothing I say in my remarks today should be taken to impugn the honorable men and women who serve in the Armed Forces, whose efforts I applaud.

Barring White supremacists from the military is of the utmost importance. As my written testimony documents, the problem of White supremacists in the ranks is a serious and growing one. Many of us know of former soldiers with extremist views who have gone on to commit serious acts of terrorism. Timothy McVeigh and Oklahoma City is the one that most people usually think of, but this isn't an old problem. Just in this past year, Active Duty troops have been found to be involved in White supremacist groups re-

sponsible for murders and domestic terrorism plots and, in some cases, international terrorism.

And White supremacy and the terror associated with it is on the rise—in fact, bucking the trend of declining rates of terror globally. We have a growing White supremacist movement both in the United States and abroad. Some of these folks are training White supremacists in other countries on military tactics. This is a significant threat to our troops, to the American public, and folks in other countries.

The armed services' own soldiers know that White supremacy is a problem. It has already been cited. The Military Times has done a poll 3 years in a row that shows between one in four and one in three soldiers are aware—have encountered White nationalism or racism in the Armed Forces.

So here are just my top-level recommendations to deal with White supremacy in the Armed Forces.

It is very clear that screening measures need strengthening. The military doesn't have a tattoo database, for example, that shows extremist tattoos. It doesn't have clear procedures to investigate social media accounts, which is where you find most extremism nowadays.

It might be wise to consider how the online activities of Active Duty troops are monitored. The recent arrest of a Coast Guard lieutenant who had all this kind of horrible stuff online tells us what this could lead to if we are not paying attention.

Military recruits do fill out questionnaires that ask whether they have been a member of an organization dedicated to terrorism, but this process relies on self-reporting, and it is unclear how much that self-reporting is verified.

There is need for more rigorous enforcement procedures and data, as has already been mentioned by the ranking member. The regulations against racism and White supremacy are generally strong, but if they are not enforced, they are paper tigers. Current regulations have penalties that are largely left up to commanders often at the unit level.

There appears to be no process to track people expelled for ties to White supremacist groups. There is little data in the public domain to know how serious this problem is. All of these are serious issues, as well as it being unclear how information on extremists in one branch are shared with other branches or the Guard or the FBI.

There need to be mandatory reports every year about the levels of White supremacy in the military. There was a House amendment that intended to add questions about White nationalism to military climate surveys that was dropped out of the National Defense Authorization Act. I would suggest that this should be looked at again.

The Pentagon's, you know, investigatory task forces in each branch should be looked at, how they look at extremist networks, what level of investigatory resources exist there. And then data should be generated so that we know how serious the problem is.

There are also loopholes in the regulations for other kinds of extremists. One example are folks involved in the anti-government militia movement. These are people who believe in war against the

Federal Government and are increasingly anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim. And some of these organizations have thousands of members and specifically try to recruit from the Armed Forces. So that is something I would suggest also needs to be looked at.

The military needs to report hate crime statistics to the FBI. Frankly, all Federal agencies need to. But this is another piece of data that would be helpful for understanding these problems.

And there also is evidence the existence of extremists in the ranks is now contributing to worldwide terrorism. Members of the most violent American neo-Nazi groups have recruited veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Active Duty service members, and that military expertise is now being shared with White supremacists in other countries. This is something else that merits examination.

I also want to say that it is very important that everybody in leadership speak out against White supremacy in the ranks. This is a bipartisan issue. It has been for a long time. And it should really be a no-brainer that this has to be done by everybody from the Commander in Chief on down.

So, in closing, I want to just say that I agree with former Joint Chiefs Chairman General Joseph Dunford, who said, "There is no place for bigotry and racism in the U.S. military or the United States as a whole." I hope the policy suggestions I provided here and in writing can bring us closer to eradicating these ideas from the ranks of our incomparable Armed Forces.

It has been an honor to speak here. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Beirich can be found in the Appendix on page 51.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Dr. Beirich.

Next is Dr. Pitcavage.

**STATEMENT OF MARK PITCAVAGE, PH.D., SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, CENTER ON EXTREMISM, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE**

Dr. PITCAVAGE. Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, distinguished members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. I am Mark Pitcavage, a senior research fellow with ADL's [Anti-Defamation League's] Center on Extremism. It is an honor to appear before you today to address the issue of White supremacy in the U.S. military.

For decades, ADL has fought against hate, anti-Semitism, and extremism in all forms by exposing extremist groups and individuals who spread hate and incite violence. Today, ADL is the foremost nongovernmental authority on domestic terrorism, extremism, hate groups, and hate crimes.

The issue of extremism in the military is one ADL's Center on Extremism has tracked for years. We alert the services about military members tied to extremism, provide assistance upon request to recruiters and investigators, and offer training on extremism and related subjects. For example, ADL provides annual training to the command staff of the Army Criminal Investigation Command and Provost Marshal General.

In 2009, ADL wrote then-Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, urging him to take measures to deal with White supremacy in the Armed Forces. The problem has only grown in urgency since then.

In my testimony, I would like to share important context about the nature of extremism in the Armed Forces.

Our Active and Reserve Components are large enough, numbering over 2 million men and women, to reflect broader American society in key ways, including the presence of extremism. Each time the White supremacist movement has surged in the U.S., that surge has been mirrored by a similar increase within the Armed Forces. It happened during surges in the 1980s, the 1990s, and in 2008 to 2011.

Today, it is happening again, as the U.S. is experiencing a surge in White supremacy propelled by the rise of the alt-right, which has brought many young, newly radicalized White males into the White supremacy movement. This is aggravated by the spread of hate online.

With each surge, the military incurs not only an increase in extremists but also increases in crime and violence that accompany that. Extremists in the military have planned terrorist acts. They have engaged in murders and hate crimes and stolen weapons and military equipment. And they provided information to other extremists. The current surge of White supremacy is no exception.

Less than 2 weeks ago, Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Hasson was sentenced in Federal court to 13 years in prison in connection with a plot to commit domestic terrorism. Prosecutors described Hasson as a man inspired by racist murderers, who intended to exact retribution on minorities and those he considered traitors. Had law enforcement not caught him, they noted, we would now be counting the bodies of the defendant's victims.

Internet searches Hasson made included "where do Congressmen and Senators live when they are in DC [District of Columbia]," "how to rid the U.S. of Jews," and "most liberal Federal judges," among others. Hasson wrote, "I can't strike just to wound. I must find a way to deliver a blow that cannot be shaken off."

Other extremists in the military in recent years have distributed information related to explosives and WMDs [weapons of mass destruction], assaulted people during White supremacist rallies, acquired bombs and explosive materials, and used a firearm to threaten members of a mosque. Even more have been exposed attending White supremacist events, joining extremist groups, distributing racist propaganda, and posting to White supremacist chat rooms and forums online.

The presence of extremists in the Armed Forces is dangerous to service members, their families, and others, and harmful to the good order, discipline, morale, and effectiveness of our troops. It is a problem that the military cannot afford to ignore.

ADL's experiences working with the services have caused us concern that policies and regulations are not always widely or uniformly implemented, nor are key personnel always trained in systematic fashion. We encourage you to work with the Department and the services to ensure uniformity and clarity of regulations, to provide proper training for those involved in recruitment, disci-

pline, and military justice on how to respond to evidence of extremism.

We offer our expertise and experience to help the services tackle this issue, including developing curricula or train-the-trainer events. Most importantly, we encourage all DOD and military leaders, as well as you, to speak out against hate. Setting an example from the top is essential. We must protect the men and women who protect our Nation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Pitcavage can be found in the Appendix on page 85.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Doctor.

Next is Ms. Brooks.

**STATEMENT OF LECIA J. BROOKS, CHIEF WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION OFFICE, SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you. Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, committee members, thank you so much. My name is Lecia Brooks. I am the daughter of a veteran of the Korean War. I am the mother of a son who proudly served the U.S. Army for two tours. This issue is deeply personal to me.

The White nationalist movement in the United States is surging and presents a serious danger to our country and its institutions, including the U.S. Armed Forces. Recent investigations have revealed dozens of veterans and Active Duty service members who are affiliated with White nationalist activity.

This is far from a new problem. In fact, the Southern Poverty Law Center has been documenting White nationalists and White supremacist infiltration of the military and urging officials to take action since 1986. In that year, we wrote Defense Secretary Weinberger and exposed the fact that Active Duty Marines at Camp Lejeune were participating in paramilitary Ku Klux Klan activities and even stealing military weaponry for Klan use.

In December 2019, as was mentioned, it was reported that the National Defense Authorization Act was altered in the U.S. Senate to remove the mention of White nationalists in the screening process for military enlistees.

According to the 2019 poll that was referenced by the Military Times, 36 percent of Active Duty service members who were surveyed reported seeing signs of White nationalism or racist ideology in the U.S. Armed Forces. In the same survey, more than half of the service members of color reported experiencing incidents of racism or racist ideology.

A number of plots by White nationalists have been thwarted. The arrest of Lieutenant Christopher Paul Hasson, a 49-year-old serving in the Coast Guard, provides a recent example. Hasson, who had also spent time in the Marine Corps and the Army National Guard, was recently sentenced to more than 13 years in prison. He explicitly identified as White nationalist and advocated for the establishment of a White ethnostate.

SPLC [Southern Poverty Law Center] has identified dozens of former and active military personnel among the membership of some of the country's most dangerous White nationalist and White supremacist groups. Those groups include the Atomwaffen Divi-

sion, a neo-Nazi group whose members have allegedly been responsible for five murders since 2017.

Brandon Russell, who launched Atomwaffen in 2015, served in the Florida Army National Guard. After his roommate Devon Arthurs killed two other roommates, who were also members of Atomwaffen, police found explosive materials. A framed photo of Army veteran and Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was found in Russell's bedroom. He also possessed fliers that read, "Don't prepare for exams, prepare for a race war." It appears Russell joined the National Guard in order to receive the kind of skills he would need to prepare for that potential race war.

All together, investigators have found seven members of Atomwaffen who have served in the military. Because of their sophisticated weapons and explosives training, those members significantly increase the group's potential to carry out deadly attacks.

Russell has since been sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges related to the explosive materials found in the apartment. From prison, he has attempted to send instructions for building explosives to another member of the neo-Nazi group.

The recent arrest of two trained soldiers, one from the United States and one from Canada, who belong to a terroristic White nationalist group called The Base have heightened our fears that they are now forming paramilitary cells.

In 2006, the SPLC released a report highlighting the continuing presence of White nationalists in the military and once again reached out to ask the Department of Defense to implement a zero-tolerance policy on White supremacy. And again in 2008 and 2009, we wrote letters to the DOD urging investigations.

Today, the SPLC offers the following recommendations.

One, adopt and rigorously enforce a zero-tolerance policy on White nationalists and supremacist activity across all branches of the military.

Two, require an annual report from military leadership that includes an audit of all investigations and resolutions of White nationalist and White supremacist activity.

Three, blunt the reach and impact of White nationalist and supremacist ideology by offering support services that work to deradicalize Active Duty service members and veterans exposed to hateful and violent messages.

We urge this committee and this Congress to use its powers to purge from its ranks those who would mar the reputation and courageous work of our dedicated U.S. service members.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Brooks can be found in the Appendix on page 107.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Ms. Brooks.

Thank you for your testimony. It is jarring, to say the very least, and is a very important wake-up call for all of us.

You have offered a number of recommendations. I would like to maybe use Lieutenant Hasson, to the extent that there is public information. Was there social media—maybe I should ask this of the next panel, actually.

Let me ask you this. We have the dark web. So individuals can gravitate to the dark web to engage in their social media if they

are so inclined. How would you recommend that the military do the kind of monitoring that is necessary?

Doctor.

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, honestly, oftentimes, to find social media accounts, you don't really have to go into super-secret areas to find them. It is material that tends to be oftentimes on everything from Facebook accounts, Twitter accounts, or in places like 4chan, which are searchable. That is not to say that there aren't areas of the web that are hidden and hard to get to to find this information, but people are shockingly open about their extremist views.

And it is the kind of material that should be easy for investigators or people talking to potential recruits to verify, especially if they are self-reporting that they are not involved in terrorist organizations or extremist organizations. You can find a lot of this material without too much difficulty.

And I would advise that that seems like the first screening mechanism that should be done. A workplace would do the same with employees, right? And this is the military. So you can find a lot. That doesn't mean it is all there, but there is a lot.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

Anyone else?

Doctor.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. Thank you. I agree with what my colleague Dr. Beirich said. There is extremist material on the dark web, but the dark web is dark to extremists as well, and it is easier for them to find other extremists and other extremist material on the regular internet. And, unfortunately, there are many places and many platforms online, from large mainstream social media platforms and other tech platforms to more obscure ones, where they can do that.

And a lot of this is actually accessible to people who want to investigate this or want to monitor this if they are educated on where to look and what to look for. And so this is not necessarily an insurmountable problem. This is something that can be tackled to at least a certain degree.

Ms. SPEIER. You each identified Active Duty and former service members in the ranks of extremist organizations. Are you able to distinguish how many are Active Duty and how many are former?

Ms. BROOKS. I don't have that listing. I could get that for you, though, Chairwoman.

Ms. SPEIER. That would be helpful. Thank you—

Ms. BROOKS. Okay.

Ms. SPEIER [continuing]. Ms. Brooks.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Ms. SPEIER. Anyone else have any comments on that?

Dr. BEIRICH. I was going to respond in the same way. I did provide some of that in the written testimony, but I could provide it for the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 149.]

Ms. SPEIER. In your estimation, as you have sought to inform the military investigators of information that you have uncovered, how have they responded?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, for the years that I was working at the Southern Poverty Law Center, this was one of my main areas of work. And I would say that starting in some of the time period that Ms. Brooks pointed out, in 2006, 2008, there was a reluctance on the part of the military to take these issues seriously.

I remember at one point myself and some of my colleagues brought dozens and dozens of forum pages of Active Duty service members from a website called New Saxon, a neo-Nazi website, and showed that these people were praising Hitler, using racial slurs, they were Active Duty, and something needed to be done. And the military at that time was not very responsive to our idea that prior regulations only required card-carrying members of hate groups to be removed from the military.

But that changed in 2009. So the regulations were tightened up and strengthened.

The question, I think, really, at this point, is things about loopholes, like militia members who are in the service; anything that sort of is more blatantly racist, as opposed to hardcore White supremacist, how it is treated; and how the regulations are enforced.

That would be my suggestion—screening mechanisms, enforcement. And then there is just a lack of data—right?—for the public to know exactly what is happening.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Would you like to respond further?

Ms. BROOKS. To Dr. Beirich's list, I would add anonymous, kind of, reporting and the continuous reporting, not just in an investigatory manner but something that happens consistently, that there is some way to monitor it regularly.

Ms. SPEIER. Do you think there should be a bystander responsibility to report?

Ms. BROOKS. I do. I mean, the ranking member mentioned that our military is our shining star, and we need to do everything that we can to ensure that it remains that way. I think that the oath that folks take when they join the military demands it. Yes.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Ranking Member Kelly.

Mr. KELLY. You can only swear a true allegiance to one cause. You either are—the United States of America or whatever organization that is. And I think you are exactly right.

Ms. BROOKS. Uh-huh.

Mr. KELLY. I have been the direct target of an assassination attempt by an extremist. Not of the same line, but I have been a direct target. A guy tried to shoot me from here to you, tried to shoot me in the chest for no reason other than he didn't like my political views, but he didn't know me.

We have to stamp this out. One is too many. And it is easy to look at it as a small issue, unless you are the one who the small issue is over. And so every single person who violates the oath and allegiance to the United States of America and to the military of America should be rooted out, because they can't have an allegiance to both.

So, that being said, I want to ask you, what can we do in the current military to either train or change cultural ideas or issues to identify people who are violating that oath and allegiance to our

United States of America? What can we do to train that better or to change the culture better?

Yes, sir.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. Thank you.

So one of the axioms of fighting extremism and terrorism is, if you see something, say something. So, first, we need to encourage people to say something when they see something.

But the fact is we also have to give people educated eyes. We have to give them the training, the ability to be able to recognize signs, whether those signs are online, whether those signs are in the real world, manifestations that appear in the real world, of this sort of extremism.

Military recruiters need this. Initial-entry trainers need this. Advanced trainers need this. Company-grade officers and noncommissioned officers need this training. EO [equal opportunity] folks need this training.

So, if you establish a foundation where people are educated on what to look for, the signs, and then there are expectations—clear regulations as well as expectations on how to report, how to investigate, how to deal with problems that emerge, then you are allowing people to see things and say things and do things.

Mr. KELLY. You know, I joined the military in the 1980s, so I have seen a significant culture change from the 1980s until today, 34 years, and it is gotten better every year. Now, that doesn't mean there haven't been blips where it has gotten worse and better, but I can tell you, we are a lot better today than we were in December of 1985, when I joined.

But I think, what can we do—like, when someone makes sexist jokes, that can lead to sexual harassment, which can lead to sexual assault, because it creates a culture where that is okay. And the same thing with, when someone makes a racist joke or a racist comment, it can lead to racism, which leads to the extremists, where you take that out in violent acts and all those things.

So my question is, how do we better screen potential applicants, and how do we identify those in the ranks to get them out before they become to the extremist level?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, I just wanted to add, the social media issue is important. Training, as Dr. Pitcavage said, is absolutely important, setting standards from the get-go when somebody comes into the military about what is expected and what is not.

But I do think, in addition to everything that Dr. Pitcavage said, there is the issue of how big or how dedicated the investigatory mechanisms are in the military to look for exactly these problems, especially when they escalate.

Training can be dealt with; with a sexist remark, a racist remark, you want to stop that immediately, you want to set standards. But to find hardcore extremists, it is going to be a little more difficult. They may try to hide what they are up to. You know, it is hard to know.

And some of the press reports I have been reading about all of this in the last few weeks indicate that perhaps there aren't the investigatory mechanisms and sharing of information at the level of the criminal investigative services across the agencies that needs to be there. And I would suggest that be beefed up.

Mr. KELLY. And, finally, I just have a few more seconds left, but I think it is incumbent—and I am talking not to you guys at the table today but all of DOD across and every leader, from the team level, at the E-5 level, to the four-stars in command of large organizations. We must not allow any of these things to take place. And when we see it wrong, we have to correct it on the spot, and we have to let people know we won't tolerate any type of racism, sexism, or anything throughout the military.

And thank you guys for being here today and testifying on this very important matter.

I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Ms. Haaland, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HAALAND. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you all so much for being here this afternoon to talk on this important topic.

I come from a district with a large Hispanic population that makes up 40 percent of my constituents. This diversity is what makes our communities rich. And I will continue to fight for all groups to have equal access to opportunities and the right to serve in an inclusive and dignified environment. Let me be clear: Hateful ideologies of any kind have no place in our military.

Ms. Brooks, this past August, media outlets reported that a master sergeant in the Air Force was an active member of Identity Evropa, one of the most visible neo-Nazi and White supremacist organizations in Colorado.

The Air Force released a statement saying, "Racism, bigotry, hatred, and discrimination have no place in the Air Force," but Sergeant Reeves remained in the Air Force. Only recently, after facing intense pressure, did the Air Force decide to begin the process of removing him from the military, and that is a concern to me.

Wouldn't you agree that this undermines diversity initiatives as well as morale and unit cohesion? And could you elaborate?

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you so much for the question. You are absolutely right; it goes against all of what the U.S. Armed Forces are about.

And I would just say a bit about Identity Evropa. They are a very noxious group of White nationalists who spread the very disinformation that Chairwoman Speier was mentioning earlier. And it is important, as far as the education campaign and the things that we need to do to address these issues, is to challenge this misinformation or this disinformation.

White nationalists advocate for a White ethnic state. They put forth conspiracy theories with respect to White genocide and the Great Replacement. It is nothing to be played with. If we allow these noxious beliefs to continue, as our diversity continues across the country, this is what we are dealing with.

You spoke to the diversity in your area, in your district, and the U.S. is experiencing a great demographic shift. And that is not playing well with a lot of White folks, and so they are putting forward this false narrative that there is a White genocide afoot.

So it is extremely important that we address this head-on, because it does undermine everything that the military is all about.

Ms. HAALAND. Thank you.

And based on your expertise—I think I know the answer to this—would you say that the services should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for personnel that are involved in these—

Ms. BROOKS. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. HAALAND [continuing]. Organizations?

Ms. BROOKS. The Southern Poverty Law Center's first recommendation is that we adopt and rigorously apply a zero-tolerance policy.

As you say, you can't on the one hand say that we don't stand for racism, you know, we won't stand for racism of any kind, and then allow members to remain in the Armed Forces.

Ms. HAALAND. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

And, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Ms. Haaland.

Mrs. Davis, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all for being here.

Ms. Brooks, I just wanted to turn to you first for a second. And I know that the Southern Poverty Law Center does a tremendous amount of tracking and research. And have you all been sharing—I guess, how long has the relationship with the military been going on? And do you see it having changed over the last few years?

I think that, you know, the comment is sometimes made that, well, the military just didn't take it seriously enough on some issues. Talk to us a little bit more about that. How would you characterize it?

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you for the question.

The military, the Department of Defense in particular, has been very receptive. As I mentioned in my oral testimony, and it is documented in the written testimony, it goes back to 1986. And then-Secretary of Defense Weinberger was very receptive and made a strong statement against White supremacists in the military.

And as Dr. Beirich mentioned, it sometimes shifts over time. We recall [Under] Secretary of Defense Chu, who thought that our report was alarmist. So it depends on, kind of, who is in office.

But we won't give up sharing the information that we have, sharing the research, because it is just that important to us.

Mrs. DAVIS. And is that an ongoing, like—

Ms. BROOKS. Oh, yes, it is an ongoing relationship. The Southern Poverty Law Center also has ongoing relationships with law enforcement. The research that we do with respect to monitoring hate and extremism, we do it so that we can share it with folks on the ground, with law enforcement on the ground, with our military leaders, with leadership of any kind. We want to put a stop to this—

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah.

Ms. BROOKS [continuing]. So we share it with people who can put a stop to this. That is why we are so grateful to the subcommittee for holding this hearing. And we implore you and the Congress to do something with the research that we provide, in addition to what Dr. Beirich provides.

And I will just say that Dr. Beirich has driven the research for the Southern Poverty Law Center for the last 20 years. So the fact

that I am talking about her research now, and Dr. Pitcavage, you can trust it implicitly.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah. Thank you.

And I am not sure, Ms. Brooks, if you mentioned this or either one of you, just talking about blunting the ideology. And it was mentioned that there are support services to do that. What are we looking at?

Ms. BROOKS. I did mention that. There are currently no support services.

Because the spread of White supremacy or White supremacist ideology is so pernicious and people are so susceptible to these messages, we want to not only, kind of—we want to support people through it, right? We want to offer a way for people to recover from the hateful messages and violent messages that they might receive and may believe. Oftentimes we are dealing with young recruits, who are just susceptible. So we don't want to just kind of throw people out; we want to find ways to deradicalize them.

It takes a little bit of work to convince people of this ideology, and it will take a little bit of work to convince them that it is not true. So—

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah. I guess I am wondering about whether we have the capacity within the military, in terms of having trained personnel who can deal with this in an ongoing way.

Ms. BROOKS. I think the resources are there, and I think that there are resources within the Armed Forces to find the people that can help the military carry out some of these support services. I know that.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh. Okay. Thank you.

I also wanted to just ask you a little bit about, you know, what you see from our military leaders.

There was an example of a young man, supposedly, who used graffiti, and it turned out it wasn't quite what people thought. But the Superintendent of the Academy used some very strong words to say, if you are going to do this, you know, get out of our military.

And I remember a number of years ago, around sexual assault, there happened to an Australian—I believe it was Australian—general, you know, who made similar comments. And, at that time, we felt that maybe our leaders aren't given, sort of, the go-ahead to make strong statements like that.

Would you like to kind of assess that sense of whether you think that military leaders are able to say things that are pretty strong and tell people to get out of our military if this is the way you feel?

Doctor.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. I would be happy to address that. And I think the example that you brought up is an example of a leader who exhibited leadership and spoke out very forcefully on an issue that came up under his purview. And we have seen over the years with the military and issues related to this that leaders lead.

One of the reasons why the integration of the Armed Forces that occurred after World War II occurred far more smoothly than a lot of people expected was because, from the top down, leaders led. They spoke out; they set expectations. In no uncertain terms, they let people know what was going to happen.

Now, some officers didn't like that, and they left the military and joined White supremacist groups and spoke out against desegregation. But they didn't do it in the military.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. And we have had examples of superlative leadership in this regard recently related to this issue as well, too, when chiefs of staff spoke out after Charlottesville, the White supremacist event there and the death of the young activist there, spoke out forcefully against hate, against White supremacy, against extremism.

And those are voices we need to encourage, and those are the voices that we need more of. And our military leadership is certainly capable of being that voice.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

My time is up. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. Ms. Luria, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LURIA. Thank you.

And thank you to the panel for being here to discuss this important issue today.

You mentioned in your testimony a recent Military Times poll that revealed that more than one-third of respondents and more than half of minority respondents said that they had personally witnessed examples of White nationalism or ideologically driven racism within the ranks within the recent months from the time that the poll was taken.

We agree that the DOD policies regarding White supremacist and extremist activities must be clear, they must be transparent. And, you know, I have looked here at this DOD policy. It dates to 2009, with a revision from 2012. And, as we know, there is a rapidly evolving use of social media and different means for spreading information.

Are there specific things due to the policy, you know, being almost a decade old that you think merit, you know, updating or revision by DOD or the services to make this policy more enforceable, more relevant to current technology or any of those other aspects?

Yes, Dr. Pitcavage?

And, Ms. Brooks, as well, I think you also referenced in your written testimony the same survey from Military Times.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. I think you bring up a key issue. You know, extremism constantly evolves, and so the methods the military must take to deal with extremism evolve too. Our current regulations, you know—actually, parts of them date back to the 1960s. And they were appended in the 1980s, appended again in 1990s, appended again when you mentioned it. But I think there are some specific things that we may want to look at.

So, for example, White supremacy today is less group-dependent than it used to be. In part because of the internet, you can be very active in the White supremacist movement without necessarily belonging to a specific group. Yet, if you look at our regulations, a lot of them refer specifically to organized groups rather than a broader movement. That may be something that needs to be addressed.

But we may also want to take a look at those regulations more comprehensively and holistically to see, like, from the top, from the start to the finish, maybe they need to be rewritten to deal with

modern circumstances, rather than just modifying or appending, you know, once more.

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you for the question.

I would add that, I would encourage military leaders to listen to their troops. This Military Times survey was about 1,600 people, and they surveyed people in the military. They themselves said that they saw the whole scourge of White nationalism, White supremacy being a greater threat to the homeland than, you know, foreign terrorism or anti-immigration combined.

And I would also point out that you referred to the incidents where service members of color experienced racist incidents. And I think it is important to point out that they saw swastikas on military bases, they saw individuals using the Nazi salute with one another, there were, you know, kind of, graffiti—things that we find that we wouldn't expect to find in the military.

I completely agree with my colleague that certainly the regulations need to be updated, but the important thing is that we take a serious stand. As was said, after the desegregation of the Armed Forces, it was from the top to every single person in the military, saying, you know, on the same page—saying from the same page. And that needs to happen again when we are talking about White supremacy and White nationalism. There can be no equivocation.

Mrs. LURIA. Thank you.

Dr. Beirich, did you have anything further to add on this topic with the remainder of my time?

Dr. BEIRICH. Just one addition. I agree with what was said here about taking a look at these constantly appended regulations, but the fact of the matter is, if they are not applied, it is pointless.

And this case in Colorado, where a person who is in Active Duty military service and is a member of Identity Evropa, would be banned based on the 1985 regulations that Weinberger put in place. So he was demoted a rank, not removed from military service.

So, you know, if you don't follow through with the whole process, it is a little pointless. And so I would suggest that be looked at very seriously.

Mrs. LURIA. Thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Ms. Escobar, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am very grateful that we are having this discussion.

And to our panelists, thank you very much for being here and for sharing this important information with us.

To our second panel, I hope that everyone is listening with an open mind.

I represent El Paso, Texas, which was targeted last summer, on August 3rd. We had a domestic terrorist who confessed to driving over 600 miles and 10 hours because, he said, he wanted to essentially slaughter Mexicans and immigrants. And he lamented the, quote/unquote, "Hispanic invasion."

And these are words that he repeated that we have heard from some of the most powerful leaders in the land, the same language

used to describe members of my community by some of our elected officials.

So this is, I think, a very important discussion. And I think something that was mentioned earlier, we have to call this out. When we don't call it out, we essentially give it cover. When we give it cover, we give it life and we give it power. And there is no greater testament to that than what happened in El Paso, Texas, on August 3rd.

I am going to open up this question to all three of our panelists.

I want to first acknowledge that military leaders have taken steps to publicize their opposition to the hatred and extremism that has been on display at events like the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. And I applaud our military leaders for saying unequivocally that those are not our values.

However, I was deeply disappointed to see an individual nominated for the top personnel job at the Department who has espoused a dangerous and radical intolerance for multiculturalism in America, which is essentially the foundation of who we are as a country.

J. David Patterson was a Presidential appointment, but he previously served as a principal deputy under secretary. Should we be concerned that someone who—obviously, he was a Presidential nominee, but he was within the Department of Defense for many years and rose through the ranks.

What does it tell us, that someone is able to ascend in this manner with these kinds of views about minorities and about America?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, I will just say that I think it is completely unacceptable. You cannot have somebody working in the Department of Defense, involved with the Armed Forces, the Pentagon, who doesn't believe the bedrock principles about equality. And that has been said from, you know, top generals and other officials for a very long time and is stated in these regulations.

So it just should not be the case that somebody who disagrees with that vision of our society and how it is reflected in the Armed Forces should be in any position of power.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Yes, sir.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. Representative, first, I would like just to say that I share the grief that you felt over El Paso. I grew up in El Paso. My family still lives in El Paso. And I used to—excuse me—I used to ride my bike to the place where the shooting occurred.

I think Representative Kelly made an excellent point when he talked about the military as being one of the most diverse institutions in our country. Forty percent of our military personnel, Active Duty military personnel, are a racial or ethnic minority. More than 50 percent of the women in the services are. And our military recognizes over 200 religious faiths.

And we need leaders, civilian and military leaders alike, who appreciate, acknowledge, and support that diversity, which is a strength.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Absolutely.

Ms. BROOKS. And adding my condolences, as well, and to you.

I think it shows us and reminds us that one person—and I think the ranking member mentioned—that one person can do so much

damage. That is why it is important for each of us to call it out each and every time.

Ms. ESCOBAR. And with the very limited time I have, Dr. Beirich, you mentioned screening mechanisms. Could you give us an example of one of the—like, what we could do, something tangible?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, I think one of the most important things here is, what happens with recruits when they come in is they self-report what their activities have been and so on. It is not very detailed. It says things like, have you been part of a domestic terrorist organization or something along those lines. I think the questions should be deeper. There should be more about people's racial views, views about ethnicity, religion.

And I also think that people that are coming into the military need to report basically what their social media accounts look like and then be verified. Whether that is to intervene at that point to help someone move away from these views or it is to simply say, this is an unacceptable situation.

So those are the kinds of things that I would look at.

And military climate surveys should include questions about these issues, as was proposed by the House in this last Defense Authorization Act, and they don't right now. So the Military Times polls now, 3 years in a row, which show these horrifying numbers of how many people have seen White nationalism and extremism in the military, are a stand-in for that—right?—and the military should be collecting that information.

And let me just say, with the 2017 Military Times poll, if the numbers are accurate to the full amount of Active Duty troops at that time, which was about 1.3 million, it would mean 325,000 people in the Armed Forces had seen White nationalism or racism. That is a pretty extraordinary number.

And, given the numbers, as Dr. Pitcavage just pointed out, that is a whole lot of minority troops—right?—troops of color, who are suffering under this situation. And, frankly, it would be a hostile work environment if it was in—

Ms. ESCOBAR. Uh-huh.

Ms. BEIRICH [continuing]. The civilian world. So, I mean, it is a serious matter. And data is needed, and then that data needs to be addressed.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you all.

Thank you, Dr. Pitcavage.

I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

Mr. Cisneros, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And thanks to our panel for being here today.

How can the Department better prepare service members, for instance, of White nationalist groups attempting to recruit them? Could they benefit from something akin to counterintelligence training to counter White nationalist recruitment?

And I know, Dr. Pitcavage—and I am sorry if I mispronounce your name—but you mentioned, like, a lot of that is done over the internet now. But how do we go to out there and how do we train the troops—is there a way to train them—to kind of recognize

when they are being recruited to these specific groups? And how do we prevent that?

Dr. PITCAVAGE. Well, I think that is a really interesting question.

I think we warn our military personnel about a number of different dangers, a number of different issues, including those online. The services all have social media policies that warn them about scams, that warn them about all sorts of dangers that they might encounter online. It is possible, similarly, to warn them to look for some of the signs that they may be targeted by an extreme group that is trying to provide them with false narratives, that is trying to indoctrinate them, that is trying to radicalize them.

And so I think there are steps that we could do to make the troops more aware that this is one of the things out there that people might try to do.

Mr. CISNEROS. I would love to hear from the other two panelists as well.

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, I think that what Dr. Pitcavage said is right. I mean, it is not as though there aren't primers out there about the signs of White nationalism, the symbols of White nationalism, some of the main groups. This is all information that could be shared, that unit commanders could be trained on.

You know, I have found that there just are some missing issues: that there is no extremist tattoo database in the military to use to identify these things, and, as a result, investigators aren't trained on what these symbols are. In the case of this Atomwaffen group that had an Active Duty guardsman in it, he had a tattoo of his very scary neo-Nazi organization on his arm, and nobody knew what it was about.

So I think there is a whole lot of education on the investigatory level, on the recruitment level, and then for the troops in general on, sort of, signs to look out for for White supremacists trying to recruit them. Because they are absolutely trying to recruit them.

Mr. CISNEROS. Uh-huh.

Ms. BROOKS. And I completely agree.

And I would add that we really all need to talk about it, it needs to be okay to talk about it. I would imagine that conversations happened, again, referencing the desegregation of the Armed Forces, people talked about it and they talked about how to manage it and handle people's concerns and anxieties. And we need to approach this, I think, in the same way.

And once we do that and we have established some mechanisms to train and to educate folks, then we can demand a zero-tolerance policy and then offer support services to those who are not able to meet the mission.

Mr. CISNEROS. Okay.

According to an article in ProPublica in 2018, the Atomwaffen Division, a violent neo-Nazi group tied to five murders and a bomb plot, at least some of their members were serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. And you just stated that.

I again ask the panelists, in your opinion, how high a priority is the focus of military leadership on eliminating White supremacy from our military ranks?

And I know you said there were regulations that we have written, but my other question too is, why haven't we put these groups in the UCMJ, outlawing them in the UCMJ?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, that is a very good question, and it is hard to know how to answer what you are saying. The only data that I could find is that about 25 troops, not all of them White supremacists, were removed in a 5-year period for extremist ties. I think those numbers are ridiculously low. Just in the testimonies that we have written for you all here, all of us, we have documented more than that in the last year.

So I think that there is a big problem here in trying to figure out how many investigations go on of this, who is identifying extremists, how is this being reported. There is supposedly a report the Pentagon does every year internally on White supremacy in the military. Is that happening? What is it indicating?

I mean, it is just very hard to answer your question because there is no transparency and no data.

Mr. CISNEROS. Go ahead, sir.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. I would just like to agree that, without being alarmist about the nature of the problem, there is a problem about White supremacy in the military, but our military leadership may not realize the full extent of it simply because the data and the transparency is not there.

Mr. CISNEROS. Uh-huh. All right.

Well, with that, I am out of time, and thank you very much.

And I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the gentleman.

Now we will hear from the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for giving me an opportunity to waive onto the committee today.

I want to thank the members of the Military Personnel Subcommittee for your work. You wrestle with some of the thorniest issues that face Congress and the House Armed Services Committee.

Ms. Brooks, I think you are right, we should listen to our soldiers. There are a lot of ways that the military can: commanders in the chain of command, EO officers, inspector generals, JAG [Judge Advocate General] officers, chaplains, and also climate surveys.

And, Dr. Beirich, you mentioned in your testimony about the watering down of a provision in the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] that was offered by the House. I was the lead author, joined by a number of my colleagues.

These hearings are often an opportunity for us to really establish the record that supports what we are trying to accomplish in the NDAA. In that amendment, it was very specific. It said that the Secretary of Defense will include—or shall include in the workplace and equal opportunity, command climate, and workplace and gender relations surveys administered by the Office of People Analytics of the Department of Defense, questions regarding whether respondents, if ever, experienced or witnessed in the workplace supremacist activity, extremist activity, or racism—it probably also should include anti-Semitism—and whether you have reported ac-

tivity described in paragraph 1. It was watered down to include extremist activity.

And I think, Ms. Brooks, in your written testimony, you pointed out how, in the screening procedures, that too was watered down. Somewhere between the House and coming through conference, someone, somebody, some organization has an aversion to the use of either “White supremacy” or “supremacist” activity in the NDAA, and it gets watered down.

So could you please make the strongest argument why, whether it is in screening or whether it is in the survey, we have to be specific?

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, let me just say, aside from the danger to the troops themselves, especially troops of color—and thank you for pursuing this issue, because I think it is critically important—the biggest problem is that White supremacy is distinct from other forms of extremism, and it is deadly to the United States.

We have had far too many former soldiers—Timothy McVeigh is best known, but Eric Rudolph, who bombed the Olympics in 1996, and many other soldiers who have been involved in serious domestic terrorist attacks were people who shared that particular point of view.

And those people then are coming out of the military and joining up with groups like The Base that was mentioned here, Atomwaffen, or they are Active Duty, and they are a threat to the American public, and they are a threat to people overseas anywhere White supremacy is functioning, anywhere our troops are if they are involved in these issues.

And White supremacy is a distinct problem. It is also indigenous to the United States. I don’t think we should forget this, right? White supremacy is born and bred out of our history. And it needs to be tackled.

The Armed Forces have been a shining light in calling this out, so we should be specific. We need to know, do people around you have White supremacist views, White nationalist ideas? What are you seeing? This is really critical information to stop domestic terrorism, hate crimes, all kinds of violence.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you.

Ms. Brooks.

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you so much. I appreciate your efforts as well. And I completely agree with everything that Dr. Beirich said.

I would point your colleagues in Congress back to the joint resolution that was passed unanimously post-Charlottesville. And in there, they rejected—and they named it—White nationalism, White supremacy, neo-Nazism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are a contradiction to the values that define the people of the United States.

We cannot just say these things post-crisis or post-massacre. We have to be about trying to thwart these attempts every day, because, as Dr. Beirich said, I mean, it is a clear and present danger. I don’t know how to make it more clear. Our history shows it, and we will just continue to repeat it until we face it head-on. White supremacy is just that serious.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you.

I yield back, Madam Chair.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you.

I would like to just ask one last question. The Base, as an organization, had an intention to derail some trains, kill some people, poison some water supplies. What do you know about The Base? And do we have representatives here in the United States that are associated with that organization? I know the leader appears to be in Russia. But what do we know about—

Dr. BEIRICH. Well, from the arrest that you mentioned in your opening remarks, we know that we have members of The Base here in the United States, which, I should just point out, the name itself is a translation of “al-Qaida.” So it shows you that there is this symbiosis in terms of dangerous, dangerous threats.

And, yes, they have a violent, violent—the list of what they have been arrested for is very scary, including murdering people. And there are, you know, probably certain dozens of members of this organization in the United States and also abroad.

What was interesting in that case is there was a member of the Canadian military who was also arrested, so it shows that this is an international problem. And it is run out of Russia—right?—which is a red flag as well. So it is a serious matter.

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

Any other comments?

Dr. PITCAVAGE.

Dr. PITCAVAGE. I think one thing that is worth pointing out about The Base is that it is part of a new wave of White supremacist group that are called accelerationist groups. And accelerationists are extreme in a very unique way. They believe that present society is not redeemable. They can't shape it into the White-dominated or White-only society that they seek; that the only thing that they can do is actually destroy our society and then build something new from the ashes.

And so accelerationists believe that any sort of violence, anything that will destabilize the system, even senseless violence, is actually good if it will help bring down the system that they so want to destroy and replace. And, you know, groups like that, you know, are particularly dangerous and are particularly liable to engage in violent acts.

Ms. SPEIER. Anything further?

All right.

Any—

Mr. KELLY. No, ma'am.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

I want to again thank you all for your testimony this afternoon. It was very enlightening.

We will now take a short recess and switch out to our second panel.

[Recess.]

Ms. SPEIER. The hearing will come to order once again.

I would like to welcome our second panel.

We are joined this afternoon by Mr. Garry Reid, who is the Director for Defense Intelligence, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; Ms. Stephanie Miller, Director of Accessions Policy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; Mr. Joe Ethridge, Chief, Criminal Intelligence Division,

U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command; Mr. Christopher McMahon, Executive Assistant Director, National Security Directorate, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service; and, finally, Mr. Robert Grabosky, Deputy Director of AFOSI [Air Force Office of Special Investigations] Law Enforcement, U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

Mr. Reid, we will begin with you.

Mr. REID. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member. On behalf of the entire team here, I would just like to convey our appreciation for your time and interest and for the committee's support to the Department in getting at this problem.

If you would allow, Madam Chair, I represent the background investigation piece of this process. And in a logical order, I would like Ms. Miller to begin, and then I will come back and do it, because it is the front end on accessions, and then we will go through to the military departments. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. That is appropriate.

Ms. Miller.

**STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE MILLER, DIRECTOR, ACCESSIONS POLICY, OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

Ms. MILLER. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Stephanie Miller, and I am the Director of Accessions Policy under the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. I am pleased to appear before you today to provide testimony on this important issue.

And I want to take a moment to thank the members of the first panel for their knowledge and expertise in this area, which the Department truly does value.

As Director of Accessions Policy, I am responsible for the oversight of all matters pertaining to the recruitment and accession of both officers and enlisted personnel. In this capacity, I am responsible for establishing policy in recruitment matters, overseeing the establishment and adherence to enlistment standards, providing oversight of resources, managing the accessions process, and other matters relating to the general sustainment of the All-Volunteer Force.

Each year, the Department recruits approximately 400,000 applicants for military service, of which approximately 250,000 individuals actually contract into the All-Volunteer Force.

We remain committed to recruiting high-quality applicants representative of the Nation that they will serve. And while today's economy has brought challenges to military recruiting, the Department has been steadfast that the services should and will adhere to our established policies and only enlist officers and enlisted candidates that actually meet our high standards.

The life cycle of military personnel from accessions processing to separation is a complex process which is constantly evolving based on best practices and newly learned information.

The beginning of the life cycle starts with each new member, whether enlisted or officer, undergoing a thorough screening process to ensure that they meet the high standards of today's military.

This multitiered screening process enables a holistic review of each applicant.

And using the tools available, we believe we have been effective at screening for individuals that have extremist ideologies or support extremist groups, but we continuously review our policies, our practices, and our methods for improvement.

For example, the Department has recently launched a centralized screening capability that vets all accessions to identify and resolve indicators of questionable allegiance. And this new vetting process has proven successful over the summer in identifying unique adverse information not always available solely from the standardized background investigation form, the SF-86.

Recruiters play a very critical role in assessing the qualifications and intents of the applicant. Each applicant is interviewed by a recruiter to obtain as much information and documentation as possible about the individual's qualifications for military service.

At our military entrance processing stations, applicants undergo a full physical by trained military professionals and background searches of law enforcement and other records. Applicants answer questions about any involvement with law enforcement agencies, including arrests, charges, citations, parole or probation, detention, and any other form of potentially adverse adjudication regardless of the outcome.

Furthermore, all applicants undergo an advanced fingerprint check, which provides a preliminary review of the history of any involvement with law enforcement, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Subsequent background checks screen recruits for extremist ties, including FBI investigative and criminal history files checks, terrorist and subversive activities checks, local law enforcement agency checks, and a review of the violent gang file at the National Criminal Information Center.

Upon entry into the armed services, the Department, the military services, and the individual share a responsibility to ensure that members are afforded the opportunity to serve with dignity and respect in a very inclusive environment.

The Department's overarching guidance is clear that military personnel must reject active participation and must not actively advocate supremacist, extremist, or gang criminal doctrine, ideology, or causes, including those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin or those that advance, encourage, or advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil liberties.

Beyond this overarching guidance, the Department continues to work with the services and other agencies to provide commanders and senior military leaders the tools that they need to keep informed about the activities or adverse behaviors of service members. Commanders, working with key stakeholders such as the services' criminal investigative offices, are swift to take appropriate action when warranted.

We are gaining additional insights on service members through the deployment of new technologies and have also explored additional testing and screening techniques that assess a range of per-

sonality dimensions to identify applicants who best fit with the military's culture of treating all personnel with dignity and respect.

In conjunction with more traditional qualification batteries, such as the ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery], these tools can be utilized as part of a whole-person applicant screening process and can tell us a great deal about the likelihood of successfully completing initial entry training, the first term of enlistment, and the ability of that individual to adapt to the rules, regulations, and requirements of military culture.

DOD remains committed to ensuring that all personnel are treated with dignity and respect in an inclusive environment free from unlawful discrimination and maltreatment. This effort is accomplished while keeping each person's civil liberties intact. And while this is not always an easy endeavor, it is critical to protect our service members and those service members who we are sworn to protect throughout the country.

Madam Chairwoman, I look forward to answering your questions in this manner and appreciate you offering this opportunity to discuss this very important issue.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Ms. Miller.

Mr. Reid.

**STATEMENT OF GARRY REID, DIRECTOR FOR DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE (COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SECURITY), OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE**

Mr. REID. Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Kelly. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on my oversight of personnel security policy and the steps we take in the Department of Defense to develop and sustain a total workforce that embodies our values as Americans.

I will focus my opening remarks on background investigations, insider-threat programs, and continuous evaluation, as these are the primary authorities and capabilities we employ to identify persons with extremist ideologies and deny them the opportunity to serve in the Department of Defense. Where indicated, we also ensure they are investigated for any policy violations or criminal behaviors and are held accountable for their actions.

Once a person has been selected for military service, the Department initiates a comprehensive background investigation. All applicants must complete the "Questionnaire for National Security Positions" published by the Office of Personnel Management as Standard Form 86, or the SF-86.

All military applicants, regardless of job code, must pass a rigorous background investigation that significantly exceeds the basic standards applied to many non-military persons that enter public service. This is a choice made by the Department of Defense in recognition that there is a high level of public trust in our military that necessitates a strong commitment to ensuring persons with criminal, extremist, or other undesirable characteristics are not allowed to serve in our ranks.

Applicants are asked probing and detailed questions about their personal conduct, job history, encounters with law enforcement, drug use, credit, foreign travel, and associations with organizations

dedicated to terrorism, the use of violence to overthrow the U.S. Government, and the commission of acts of force or violence to discourage others from exercising their constitutional rights.

Background investigators supplement and enrich the self-reporting data on the SF-86 with information provided by former educators, employers, coworkers, and neighbors of the applicants. Investigators check Federal and State law enforcement databases for criminal history and review public records, credit reports, and other automated data sources. Where needed, investigators initiate additional checks, including personal interviews.

This information is aggregated in a report of investigation and submitted to a certified adjudicator, who assesses overall eligibility to hold a sensitive position and for military service against the 13 Federal adjudicative guidelines. Of the guidelines, personal conduct, criminal conduct, and allegiance to the United States are the primary criteria used to vet personnel that exhibit any extremist behaviors. While cases with allegiance are uncommon, overall, these three guidelines combine for almost half of the denials for military personnel.

And keeping in mind, the prior screening Ms. Miller described happens in front of this, so you have already narrowed down to a more selective population by the time we run this.

Applicants with favorable background investigation results are subject to two sets of monitoring procedures throughout their military service.

Each of our military departments manage their own insider-threat programs that serve as a conduit for reporting behaviors of concern that are observable in the workplace. All DOD personnel are mandated to report such behavior against the reporting thresholds for insider threat that are similar but not identical to the Federal adjudicative guidelines. The DOD component insider-threat hubs provide reporting to a central DOD insider-threat center, led by our Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency.

Presently, all DOD personnel are covered by at least 1 of the 43 insider-threat hubs distributed across the Department, and reporting of suspicious or alerting behaviors is steadily increasing. Any behavior that crosses an established threshold is assessed and acted upon by insider-threat hubs, the chain of command, or security managers within the owning component.

In addition to monitoring for insider-threat behaviors at the component level, the Department also conducts a continuous evaluation program at the DOD level. Presently, 1.9 million DOD personnel are enrolled in our continuous evaluation system, and the Department has plans to enroll the full population by October 2021.

Continuous evaluation complements insider-threat reporting by providing data from outside the Department with automated monitoring of multiple government, commercial, and public data sources for indicators of behavior that violate established standards of conduct.

When alerts from continuous evaluation data sources indicate unacceptable behavior, the responsible security manager submits an incident report that is subsequently reviewed by the chain of command and the DOD Central Adjudications Facility. If appropriate, the incident can be referred to a law enforcement or counterin-

telligence investigation. If indicated, the subject can be ultimately removed from eligibility to hold a position and processed for separation from military service.

Madam Chair, I will just close by highlighting that this is a dynamic process that is always in a state of improvement. As some members know and we briefed here, and supported by Congress, the government is in the process of adding additional controls in what we call the personnel vetting enterprise, moving to a continuous vetting model across the entire government. So everything I have described to you will continue to be refined and enriched to where we have the greatest degree of awareness of where threats are across the Department, including those posed by those with extremist attitudes.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

[The joint prepared statement of Mr. Reid and Ms. Miller can be found in the Appendix on page 127.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Reid.

Mr. Ethridge.

**STATEMENT OF JOE E. ETHRIDGE, JR., CHIEF, CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, U.S. ARMY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION COMMAND**

Mr. ETHRIDGE. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the subcommittee. I am Joe Ethridge, Chief of the Criminal Intelligence Division, Army Criminal Investigation Command [CID]. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide testimony on the important issue of racially motivated extremist threat.

As the Chief of CID's Intelligence Division, I am responsible for identifying and assessing criminal threats confronting the Army and assisting in developing courses of action to prevent or mitigate.

The CID identifies soldiers suspected of participating in extremist activities in multiple ways, to include chain-of-command reporting, local police, the media, public-facing social media searches, tip-line reports, and FBI domestic terrorism investigative reporting. We evaluate these reports to identify supporting facts.

The majority of the soldiers identified as participating to some extent in extremist activities are not subjects of criminal investigations. The more common scenario is participation in an online forum that might be expressing extremist or supremacist views.

In these instances, CID notifies commanders via information report for action in accordance with Army policy. Commanders have the authority to counsel, train, and take disciplinary action to preserve good order and discipline in the unit. Additionally, CID notifies the DOD Consolidated Adjudications Facility and the Intelligence and Security Command for personnel security adjudication.

The CID initiates investigations when indications or allegations of a crime are present. In early 2019, CID observed a small increase in criminal investigations initiated with soldier participation in extremist activities as a component. Specifically, there were 7 criminal investigations initiated with an extremist-activity component in 2019, in comparison to an average of 2.4 per year in the

fiscal year 2014 to 2018 period. This includes soldiers from all components—Active Duty, National Guard, and the Army Reserve.

During the same time period, the Federal Bureau of Investigation notified CID of an increase in domestic terrorism investigations with soldiers or former soldiers as suspects. The FBI reporting also clearly stated that extremist organizations were actively seeking veterans' skills.

In May 2019, the Provost Marshal General of the Army and I briefed the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and members of the Army Staff on the CID and FBI observations. The Vice Chief of Staff of the Army directed the formation of a working group to review current policies and procedures to prevent and address extremism in the ranks.

The working group recommended several adjustments to the Army policy for soldier participation in extremist activity stated in Chapter 4–12 of Army Regulation 600–20. That is Army Command Policy. The revision of AR [Army Regulation] 600–20 is scheduled for release in the second quarter of this year.

Internally, CID expanded its liaison relationship with the FBI, traditionally centered on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force and the National Gang Intelligence Center, into the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit.

In summary, over the past year, CID has increased collection efforts, informed Army leadership of our observations, participated in the review and changes to Army policy, expanded our relationship with law enforcement partners, and made notification to commanders.

Additionally, CID has formulated a request to the Army Inspector General to add unit implementation of extremist activity policy that is encapsulated in AR 600–20 as a focus area for the next inspection cycle for Army-wide inspector general inspections.

The Army is postured to identify extremist activity in the ranks and has both the policy and the leadership tools to prevent emergence as a pervasive issue.

Madam Chairwoman, I am happy to answer any questions you or the members of the subcommittee may have at this time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ethridge can be found in the Appendix on page 135.]

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Ethridge.

Mr. McMahan.

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER J. McMAHON, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE, NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE**

Mr. McMAHON. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on extremism in the military.

I am Christopher McMahan, the Executive Assistant Director of the National Security Directorate for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, NCIS. I am pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to appear before you and provide testimony on this topic.

As Executive Assistant Director of the National Security Directorate, I lead our investigations and operations confronting the in-

telligence and terrorism threats posed to the Department of the Navy personnel, assets, research, and technologies. My team also addresses all force protection issues affecting the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps, to include expeditionary force engagements, ship visits, and static forces support.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is currently conducting multiple domestic terrorism investigations involving racially motivated extremism directed against or affecting the personnel in or associated with the Department of the Navy.

These investigations receive immediate priority attention. Our highly skilled civilian Federal law enforcement professionals use all available resources to address these matters, working closely with the FBI, our fellow military criminal investigative organizations, and additional Federal and local partners to address these threats.

Over the course of fiscal year 2018, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service experienced an increase in the number of domestic extremism related reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation involving Department of Defense-affiliated personnel. In response to these referrals and to more accurately reflect the scope of these incidents, NCIS established the unique case category “domestic terrorism” for investigative and operational reporting purposes.

NCIS generally defines domestic terrorism as terrorism perpetrated by individuals and groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.

NCIS investigates crimes associated with domestic extremist organizations when there is an apparent Federal violation, identified violent extremist ideology, and an active service member or current Department of the Navy civilian employee who has expressed an aspiration to further the identified violent ideology by threats, acts of violence, or other enabling criminal activity. For instances in which a crime is suspected, a general crimes investigation under the appropriate case category within NCIS for the crime is initiated.

NCIS does not pursue investigations of Department of the Navy-affiliated individuals who simply make statements indicating they share the beliefs or a subset of the beliefs held by domestic extremist groups unless information exists indicating their activities meet this threshold. In investigations where it is determined crimes are not evident, information is passed to appropriate commands for administrative actions deemed appropriate by the commands involved.

In conclusion, the predication for domestic terrorism investigations typically comes from command complaints, other investigative agency referrals, or tips. For example, NCIS maintains formal information-sharing agreements with the FBI on terrorism matters. These same well-established channels serve as the primary method of information sharing on domestic terrorism matters involving Active Duty service members or current Department of the Navy employees.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McMahan can be found in the Appendix on page 139.]

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

Mr. Grabosky.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT S. GRABOSKY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
LAW ENFORCEMENT, STRATEGIC PROGRAMS AND REQUIRE-  
MENTS, U.S. AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGA-  
TIONS**

Mr. GRABOSKY. Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address you on this topic.

As the Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, Strategic Programs and Requirements Division, Headquarters, Air Force Office of Special Investigations [OSI], I help oversee policy, training, and the resources necessary to guide major criminal investigations impacting Department of the Air Force.

OSI has agents assigned to over 250 locations around the world, to include 22 locations with the Joint Terrorism Task Force, engaged in collaborative efforts with other Federal law enforcement partners on matters of mutual concern, such as matters involving domestic extremism.

Pertaining to the topic of possible White supremacists within the ranks of the military, Department of the Air Force and OSI are very concerned with early identification and timely resolution of matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces.

In fact, Department of the Air Force has a written punitive policy pertaining specifically to participation in extremist activities. The policy specifically states military personnel must reject active participation in criminal gangs and other organizations that, among other things, advocate supremacist, extremist, gang doctrine, ideology, or causes.

Military members who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action under Article 92 for failure to obey a lawful order under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

It is important to note that the Air Force policy dictates mere membership in the organization is not prohibited. OSI has investigative responsibility to investigate these matters where military members who are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice are suspected of active participation in extremist or supremacy groups prohibited by the Air Force instructions.

Since 30 September 2019, OSI received about nine reported incidents involving possible supremacy activity on the part of Air Force members. These incidents came to our attention in various ways. Out of the nine reports, OSI opened eight investigations and referred one incident to Security Forces for further investigation.

Out of the eight OSI investigations, only one involved active participation by the member. One incident was disproven, and the remaining six involved inappropriate or racially insensitive verbal comments or online postings, which was referred back to command for action.

For the one active participation incident, the accused's command administered administrative action and a reduction in rank. As an impartial and independent investigative agency for the Air Force, OSI does not make recommendations on potential punitive or administrative actions.

It is also important to note OSI conducted more than 2,500 criminal investigations in 2019. Most of these criminal investigations involved some form of data exploitation, such as extraction of information from cell phones, other personal computer devices, or reviews of social media applications. Our law enforcement data exploitation activities over the past year of thousands of devices and social media accounts have not resulted in identifying additional extremist activity within our Air and Space Forces.

Even though the amount of extremist incidents for Department of the Air Force remains small, OSI and its criminal investigative agents remain vigilant to identify and quickly resolve matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to provide insight into some of the exceptional work our agents do every single day, and I look forward to providing additional information as this hearing continues.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grabosky can be found in the Appendix on page 142.]

Ms. SPEIER. All right. Thank you.

Let me start with you, Mr. McMahan. In your statement, you make the statement, “NCIS does not pursue investigations of Department of the Navy-affiliated individuals who simply make statements indicating they share the beliefs of a subset of the beliefs held by domestic extremist groups.”

So, if I say I am a racist, I am not going to be investigated, I am not going to be evaluated as to whether or not I should be kicked out?

Mr. MCMAHON. Ma’am, so we, NCIS, would not actually conduct an investigation. We would refer that back to the command of the member who is—is a member of that command.

So we would refer that member back to the command, provide the command that information, the information that we have gained in any sort of manner, and then allow the command to take care of them in the appropriate manner.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

Mr. Grabosky, you said specifically that “mere membership in the organizations is not prohibited.” But if you had a tattoo of that organization, that would be actionable?

Mr. GRABOSKY. Chairwoman Speier, mere participation is not something that OSI actually investigates. We actually investigate the active participation of a member.

There are many avenues within the military, including command or equal opportunity offices, that conduct investigations of viewpoints of individuals. If it does not rise to the level of a felony investigation of active participation, we don’t get involved in—

Ms. SPEIER. Okay. You are missing my point.

Mr. GRABOSKY. I am sorry.

Ms. SPEIER. You are saying active participation equals something like a tattoo but active participation does not equal being a member of one of these extremist organizations, and I find that astonishing.

Mr. GRABOSKY. According to Air Force policy right now, active participation is actually attending rallies, fundraising for them, or actually being part of the organization and actively involved in it.

Ms. SPEIER. But if you are a member, that is a level of activity. I think we need to look at that.

Ms. Haaland had referenced an Air Force individual who was not dismissed or discharged. Can you explain to us why?

Mr. GRABOSKY. The information received to us of being part of an extremist organization, we opened an investigation, we produced a report, and we provided it to command, and command took action.

As I said in my statement, OSI does not get involved in determining punishments. That is in the legal realm of the United States Air Force, and the investigative agency is not involved in that process of making a decision.

Ms. SPEIER. And, in your experience, have you found that when you have completed your investigations and referred them back to the command, are you ever made aware of whether or not they take action?

Mr. GRABOSKY. Yes. If it rises to the level of administrative action, we get an after-action report that we have to update our files with.

Ms. SPEIER. And do you convey that to the FBI?

Mr. GRABOSKY. If it rises to the level for criminal indexing, yes. All our investigations abide by criminal indexing of convictions. In this incidence, I believe he received an administrative punishment, which does not get reported to the FBI as a criminal conviction.

Ms. SPEIER. Can you explain to us—okay. So, in this case, he remains in the military. He had nonjudicial punishment, it sounds like. Is that correct?

Mr. GRABOSKY. I am aware that—I believe he received a letter of reprimand.

Ms. SPEIER. So it was even—it was a letter of reprimand.

Mr. GRABOSKY. Correct, ma'am.

Ms. SPEIER. So no action taken regarding rank, pay, anything like that.

Mr. GRABOSKY. He received an administrative reduction in rank by one rank, in conjunction with the letter of reprimand. I am aware of that.

Ms. SPEIER. And can you remind us again what he was actually engaged in?

Mr. GRABOSKY. He was an active participant of Identity Evropa.

Ms. SPEIER. So he is an active participant in this—

Mr. GRABOSKY. He was fundraising.

Ms. SPEIER. He was fundraising for this organization, and he is still in the military.

Mr. GRABOSKY. As I said, ma'am, that is a decision that is beyond the criminal—

Ms. SPEIER. I realize my disbelief is not something that should be registered to you but to his command, but I am astonished by it, because I think the potential for placing our service members at risk is so great.

In the cases that you have—and if you can answer this, if you would like—that you have investigated, how many of them come to

your attention because of a bystander, another service member who alerts you to it?

Mr. ETHRIDGE. Ma'am, I can't give you a specific count, but—

Ms. SPEIER. Majority? Minority?

Mr. ETHRIDGE [continuing]. Tip line—I wouldn't say it was a majority, but a common way for us to receive complaints is through the tip-line process. We have an automated tip line. Normally the source of those tips is a fellow soldier or a family member.

Ms. SPEIER. Is that the case for all of you?

Mr. McMahan.

Mr. MCMAHON. Ma'am, all of the 14 ongoing investigations we are in the process of investigating right now have all come to us via the FBI. So we are working in partnership with the FBI. At this time, we haven't had one complaint come forward off of our tips line regarding White supremacy groups or any other racially motivated groups.

Ms. SPEIER. I have exceeded my time, so I will come back for a second round.

Ranking Member Kelly.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to talk to you two, because you are the guys who have the authority to do something.

And it amazes me—I just completed a course last week, and there is a book, "Great New Work," and we had to read that. But in it, it talks about the 1944 OSS [Office of Strategic Services]—which is the precursor of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]—sabotage manual for Germany, written by William Donovan, and it was the field manual. And it said things like, "Insist on doing everything through channels. Never permit shortcuts to be taken in order to expedite decisions. Make speeches. Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate your points. When possible, refer all matters to committees. Make committees as large as possible, preferably be more than five. Bring up irrelevant issues as frequently as possible. Haggle over wording and details."

You guys are Department of Defense, okay? The climate survey that we have talked about—we have a great Secretary of Defense. Secretary Esper is outstanding. And he is a business guy; he gets this. Why don't we write in the climate survey and ask the question that we want?

You don't need congressional authority to do that, I don't think. I think you can write into your entry exam the exact questions that you want. I think you can put in the—you or someone, one of your counterparts, can write in the exact questions.

And it doesn't just need to be White supremacy; it needs to be any—because we have to identify what it is in specifics. If it is White supremacy, we can't use the word "extremism," but if it is something other than White supremacy, we can't use the word "extremism." We have to use the specific words. So you can write into a climate survey to find out what it is.

The second thing is the actions, it is—these guys can't do anything. They don't have the authority to prosecute or to say, this shall result in this. But at the DOD level, at the Department-head level somewhere, you do have the authority, without congressional authority, to say, if you are found as an active, passive, any other

member in this organization or these organizations, you shall be removed from service or you shall be reduced in rank or you shall be criminally charged. We do have that authority.

And I would just ask that—sometimes I think we get a big bureaucracy, and I really—you ought to go read that OSS field manual, and you will go, “Holy cow, that sounds like 90 percent of American businesses today and all of our government and all of our organizations.” And we have to get away from that. And I think you guys can do that.

So, that being said, what recommendations can you make for us to root out White supremacy or any other type of extremism? What can we do better to keep them out and to identify them and get them out?

Ms. MILLER. Yes, sir. And I certainly appreciate your comments.

The responsibility to incorporate the requirement into climate surveys is within the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. While my expertise is in accession, I am part of the Personnel and Readiness team, and so I understand that our colleagues who are experts with respect to our climate surveys are in the active effort right now to research and determine the best way to ask those questions to glean the most information possible.

And so they are actively engaged, and we can provide an update on that work to the committee on their efforts in that regard.

We do have, certainly, command climate surveys, and we have workforce equal opportunity surveys, both at the Active and the Reserve level, that do ask questions about racist and extremist group experience that they may be knowledgeable about, or hate crime incidents. And we do collect data on that and have for a number of years.

The data that we have is slightly different than the results that we have seen from the Military Times poll, and so we want to take into account the information that they have collected. The information that the Department has collected is more—

Mr. KELLY. I mean, I understand that, but what we have to do is, we know there are things we need to know right now.

Ms. MILLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. KELLY. And so we can get the perfect answer and the perfect wording, or DOD can write a policy which asks the question and gets specific, and guess what? We don't have to write the question, we don't have to put—“Have you experienced any type of terrorism, racism,” and put it down there and say, “Please write in.” That may be a more effective way, because then we get what they really think it is.

But I think we have to execute, because, if not, we are relying on outside data, which is not scientific, which is the best that we have right now. But you have the capability through command and control to ask the question that gets us the data so we can make specific decisions to get it better.

And my time is about to run out, but I thank you guys, and I think we are doing a lot of things right. But I think you guys can get the specifics without waiting for congressional authority to do that, and I would just ask that you please do that.

And thank you all for what you do and for being here, and especially my law enforcement guys. As a former DA [District Attorney], I always appreciate you all.

And I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I know that several of you in the investigative services mentioned your work and the importance, really, of having the terrorist and subversive checks. But I am wondering, can you give us some more understanding of what happens after you have picked up something that concerns you?

You toss that over to the FBI or—it sounds like a lot of things come to you from the FBI. So how does that work? And what is it that really triggers concern, and what doesn't?

Mr. MCMAHON. Ma'am, I will take the lead on this one.

When the FBI refers something generally to us, that is kind of how it flows back. If there is a military member or somebody attached specifically, for myself, to the Navy or the Marine Corps, the FBI refers that back to NCIS to work the investigation collaboratively.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh.

Mr. MCMAHON. At that point in time, usually what triggers that is either some online activity, that basically they find somebody online they can actually actively identify that that person is associated with the Navy or the Marine Corps and that they have potentially talked about being able to procure weapons or take some sort of action. And so they refer that back to us.

And we work that collaboratively with the FBI, looking to, you know, continue the investigation, monitor the activity not just online but holistically during the investigation, and then also look for any sort of other ties that they might have to other individuals within the military to make sure that we are, kind of, rooting out any additional problems that might exist.

Mrs. DAVIS. Can you share, is it more usual that there are a number of people involved? Or this is sort of a loner, in many cases? Is it possible to—

Mr. MCMAHON. Again, I am going off limited data, as was talked about earlier in the earlier panel. With the 14 investigations that we have specifically focused on domestic terrorism, it is a little bit of a mixed bag.

There are a few investigations that have indicated one or two other members that are in communication. But quite often they are involved in a group that the other members are not current military, potentially maybe have been foreign military—or former military. But, currently, a lot of times, they are just in communication with people that are just espousing the same viewpoints.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh.

Mr. Ethridge, did you want to comment on that?

No? Oh, okay. That is fine. Thank you.

Before the Marines United scandal, it is my understanding we certainly didn't check people's social media when they were being recruited. Is that correct? Or were you looking at social media at that time?

Ms. MILLER. So I can answer that, ma'am.

So, right now, social media checks are not a part of the recruiting process. That is an element that we are working in collaboration with our colleagues in the intelligence community to determine how best to potentially incorporate that requirement.

Mrs. DAVIS. I think when that happened I was shocked, actually, that you didn't do that. Because certainly, as Members, you know, even within our offices, that is something that people talk about. And, often, people are very aware that, you know, we ask them to show us some of—you know, to show us, would they mind sharing that information.

So if we are not checking that at recruitment, isn't that a real gap?

Ms. MILLER. So, right now, the recruiting process is a multitiered approach, starting with a recruiter who asks a number of questions during the recruitment interview. And, also, we pull local record checks, and then we also do the FBI check that I had mentioned before with the fingerprint check.

And then, once we have that information and the individual appears to be suitable for military service, if they are contracted, then they fill out that SF-86 form that we mentioned that initiates the background investigation process. And Intelligence then takes it from there, and they can do additional work beyond what we have done at an initial entry level.

And Mr. Reid can speak more to that.

Mr. REID. And once they sign that SF-86, for the past 3½ years it has been written in that form, that they are granting consent to limited—I will say “limited”—social media monitoring. It has to be publicly facing. We cannot go behind passwords, we cannot look in private chat rooms, et cetera.

We don't do that on scale for every background investigation right now. We have the ability to do it if there are investigative leads that come through the process I described. We would like to do it on scale for everybody all of the time. We are still developing the right tools.

There are pitfalls here. There is false information, of course, on-line.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh. We understand.

Mr. REID. There is identity resolution. There is use of handles and avatars, that you sometimes don't quite know what you have.

But, earlier on, you mentioned our work with the Office of People Analytics, one of the members mentioned that. The Personnel Security Research Center are great partners of ours. We are in the midst of yet another pilot to figure out how to do this. There are great returns on personal conduct and some on allegiance, making disparaging remarks where you think you are in private and it is associated with an anti-government attitude. So we see promise there.

Our investigative friends can do this when we have leads and things that we really need to get into. In terms of a screening protocol, we haven't found the right success model yet. But we have the ability to do it if we need to.

Mrs. DAVIS. Do you need help from Congress to do that better?

Mr. REID. I don't think so. I knew you would ask. We have—well, no. You have given us the authority.

And insider threat, by the way, you know, for the last three NDAAAs, we have gained more scope of insider threat. Insider threat is a great tool.

The things I described that we do in background investigations, those are Federal guidelines. Those are set by the DNI [Director of National Intelligence] for security and the Director of OPM [Office of Personnel Management] for suitability. We don't get wiggle room as an agency to do our own, right? Because there is a reciprocity factor.

Insider threat is a much more flexible framework. We have, as I mentioned, programs in every one of our components. They are building; the reporting is building.

And for my military criminal investigative organization colleagues, what they represent to you, they are enforcing U.S. Code. These things—and it was mentioned on all the panels today, that these behaviors fall below U.S. criminal code. But we have policies, we have military security policy.

Separating someone from the service administratively sometimes takes time, and sometimes we don't rush to do it because we want to reserve the ability to take full action. But if an individual exhibits behaviors, even though they are below a criminal investigative charge, it is very likely going to make them unsuitable for a security clearance. And every member of the U.S. military has to qualify for a Secret clearance, whether they have access to Secret information or not. That is the bar that I describe.

So it is very likely, without getting into any specific case, that when you follow through on the administrative side, an individual loses their eligibility to serve, and they get separated. It takes a little time sometimes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Cisneros.

Mr. CISNEROS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

And thank you all for being here today.

Ms. MILLER, I believe it was you who commented about the background checks and part of that that they do, and you look at the gang file. But a lot of these White supremacist groups, these alt-right groups that are committing some of this violent activity, like what happened in Charlottesville, aren't on the gang file. They are not classified as gangs. A lot of these international White supremacist groups that are becoming more popular online and that people are joining aren't classified as terrorist groups.

So when you are doing these background checks, these groups aren't popping up, it is not going up there. What are we looking for, then, to kind of classify them if they might be part of these groups?

Ms. MILLER. That is an excellent question, sir. Thank you.

I mentioned the multilayered approach that we take, and that really does start with the recruiter who does this in-depth interview with the applicant. And they ask about a number of qualifying factors, the traditional ones of citizenship and age, level of education, any past criminal records, medical history, drug use.

And then they also ask about tattoos. And tattoos, as we have learned, is one of the best ways to help identify whether an individual has had a current or past history of engagement with any

sort of extremist or gang activity. And our colleagues in the first panel mentioned the importance and the value of knowing those tattoos.

For many years, the recruiters in our military entrance processing stations had multiple, you know, files, large binders, with copies and images of tattoos to try to help educate them and help identify tattoos. What we have learned is that the landscape of tattoos evolves so rapidly, and it is very difficult to maintain currency on those, sort of, static resources and references.

And so we agree with our colleagues in the first panel that having access to timely information about tattoos and branding is very important. And so one of the requirements that we now include is, for any sort of concerning or questionable branding or tattoo, there is a requirement to take images, as appropriate, of those markings and to actually engage local law enforcement and to engage the FBI and to actually ascertain more information about those markings. And that is a very important step of part of what we do.

And then, also, the recruiters do a lot of work in terms of working with family members. They spend an incredible amount of time in their community, and so they get to know what are some of the prevalent concerning indicators in those communities. They talk to school counselors, they talk to school resource officers, they talk to local police. And so they will get a sense of who this individual is and the company he or she may keep.

And so that is some of the preliminary work that we do before we hand it over to more formal channels and more formal investigative channels.

Mr. CISNEROS. Yeah.

Now, Mr. Reid, you said, you know, the investigative officers, they are enforcing U.S. Code, right? But the military, the Department of Defense has policy. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to drugs. Why don't we have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to White supremacy?

You know, Mr. Grabosky had stated that being a member of this organization isn't illegal, or it is not against the policy, but only if you are active. You know, would we let a member of al-Qaida or a member of ISIS into our military if they said, "Well, I am a member, but I am not active"? Why aren't we doing this the same for these White supremacist groups?

Mr. REID. Sir, I believe we do have a policy, in that, again, your eligibility for service is hinged to the Federal adjudicative guidelines, and one of those guidelines speaks to engaging in behavior that denies others their basic constitutional rights.

So any involvement with a group that espoused those views, and membership and involvement with that group, although it may be below the level of a criminal code violation, would be a disqualifier for a decision by an adjudicator on the continued eligibility of that individual.

Mr. CISNEROS. So you are saying, if somebody is a member of that group, they are not eligible to—one of these White supremacist groups—they are not eligible to serve in the U.S. military?

Mr. REID. They could be disqualified based on their participation. The front-end questionnaire asks questions, are you a member of any of those groups? If they withhold information, they falsified the

form, which, by the way, is a criminal Federal offense also, but it also, again, goes to loyalty and honesty, which are adjudicative guidelines.

So there are 13 guidelines, and they crisscross in many instances, where, as I mentioned earlier, personal conduct, criminal conduct, allegiance are the main categories. There are other categories, terrorism categories. Alignment with any of those activities would be an element of an investigative file.

And keep this in mind—I know you are running out of time. We are going to this continuous evaluation. We are already doing it. So we don't wait until the next reinvestigation anymore like we used to. These are occurring every day.

We have public records checks, other checks, where, if this comes to light—insider threats, someone mentions anything to an insider-threat officer, chain of command, it is going to go to a security manager, it is going to go to an insider-threat hub, and they are going to pull the string on that and find out what is going on, and if it is there, they are going to take action.

Mr. CISNEROS. All right.

Well, Madam Chairman, I just want to say this one last thing, and it really is: This is a bigger problem in our country, and it is something that we need to work on. It is not only a military problem; it is something that we need—these groups, they need to be classified as domestic terrorist groups, as gangs. And we need to recognize what they are; these international organizations are terrorist organizations.

And, with that, I yield back.

Ms. SPEIER. Thank you, Mr. Cisneros.

Mr. Reid, Ms. Miller—and, Ms. Miller, we have worked together on a number of issues. I have a high regard for you. But I am really flummoxed by what we have heard tonight—today—soon to be tonight.

In this policy, it says that any of these active participation in gangs or organizations is prohibited. So if it is prohibited and we have an Air Force service member who is actively fundraising for this despicable organization, why is he still in the military?

Ms. MILLER. Ma'am, we will have to refer you to the Air Force to gain more details on that specific case.

To your point, yes, the policy does say it prohibits active participation, which includes fundraising, demonstrating, rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, leading members, distributing material, wearing gang colors and, to your point earlier, tattoos or other brandings.

And so, therefore, those are the type of indicators that need to be evaluated when determining whether there has been a violation of this policy, which then could therefore lead to, you know, certainly administrative separation and other actions against the individual.

As it pertains to that case and as Mr. Reid indicated earlier, the services often work very deliberately through that process. And there is an element of due process consideration, and so sometimes that does take time. But we will have to refer you to the Air Force to garner specific details about that individual case.

Ms. SPEIER. But here is the problem. If all of these cases that you work very hard to investigate are then referred to the command and there is total discretion within the command, there is not equal due process, there is not equal parsing out of punishment, if we don't have a standard.

And, you know, if I am a member of the Sierra Club, I espouse all of their values. If I am a member of an organization that is specifically interested in doing harm to the United States, I believe and will be supportive of that.

So I have a real problem with the vagueness of these policies and the distinction between active participation and membership. And I think these policies have to be updated. They are woefully inadequate for what we know today is a very serious domestic terrorism problem. So we are going to hopefully be working with you to try and develop, you know, clearer outlines.

One last question I have, and then I will turn it over to Mr. Kelly. What training is being provided to commanders now about White supremacism specifically, the accelerationist community, and a number of these organizations that we referenced here today?

Ms. MILLER. Ma'am, my capacity here today is accessions, as I mentioned, and so I am not an expert, per se, on the level of training that commanding officers may receive.

But the policy requires training. It requires training at the entry-level training point; it requires routine and regular training and certainly all the way up to the commanding officer level. So we will have to take that question back and make sure that the committee gets a fulsome answer from those who are responsible for that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 151.]

Ms. MILLER. One point I think that is very helpful is that each command has an equal opportunity advisor. And equal opportunity advisors, I think, are a very important asset in that command triad. And they do receive training specifically on extremism and White supremacy, actually, largely pulling from information from the ADL and the Southern Poverty Law Center, to help educate them to look for concerning signs and indicators within their command and to advise their commanding officers on what to recognize. And so I do think that that is a valuable asset.

Ms. SPEIER. And I will just finally say, I would like to associate myself with Mrs. Davis' comments. Any job application today requires that the review that takes place looks at social media. So our reluctance or timidity in wanting to do that at the front end in accession makes no sense. I mean, this is the 21st century, and that is how people communicate. And if we can't look at that, then we are not necessarily doing this fulsome review as we have individuals become members of the military.

I will now turn it over to Mr. Kelly.

Mr. KELLY. I would just ask that you guys please look at requiring that when you do administrative action or UCMJ, okay, when these guys do the hard work, that you make them report that to DOD so that we can collect that data. Because without that, we don't know what is happening below.

So if you would require that they—number one is, people are usually more accountable on things that they have to report. We know that from almost anything. So I think that is an easy fix.

Now I am going to ask you guys, what can Chairwoman Speier and myself—what authorities do you need to better do your job to not just—and White supremacy is what we are talking about today, but whether it is other organizations, it doesn't matter to me; they are all bad to the order and discipline of the military.

So what authorities do you need from us to make your job easier? What can we do to give you authorities?

Ms. MILLER. I know Mr. Reid already answered that similar question. I will echo his sentiments, that I believe the Department has the authorities that we need to work after this issue.

Certainly, the continued evolution and development of additional tools and capabilities, particularly as it comes to social media scraping, I believe, will be very informative, especially during the accession process. But there are some initial challenges and hurdles that we need to work through before we can implement that on a large scale.

Mr. KELLY. Now the really hard question. For you two guys, and then we will—and I am not ignoring you all, but these are the decision makers, or at least you influence the decision makers. I would ask, what is one thing that you can do with your current authorities that immediately, incrementally, make a difference in either identifying members of organizations that are adverse—White supremacists, any other group that are adverse to the interests of the United States Government, and then, also, or that punishes them or makes a punishment even, someone who is in an organization like that?

Let's be for real. If they are a member, it doesn't matter whether you can catch them being active; they are not passive. They didn't join it to be passive.

And so, if there is anything, what can you do that you can do or influence your superior to do to make that immediately either to keep them out or get them out?

Mr. REID. I apologize, sir. I didn't exactly hear the question you wanted me to answer.

Mr. KELLY. Under the authorities—I asked what authorities you need from us, and you said none. So, in your current job, what can you do, what one simple thing can you do, to make it easier either to keep people out, identify them, or get them out of the DOD?

Mr. REID. I think you hit on a very good one, and that is, if we could find a way to extend our reach—of the things we do in background investigations, as I indicated, we cannot apply those at the Federal level until an individual has been placed on contract and signs a consent form. So that space that exists prior—left of that is a difficult space for us to operate in.

Among other things, especially when you talk about social media, any time I am going to go check any of that, I am going to get other U.S. person information. And we run into a lot of obstacles with privacy concerns, civil liberty concerns, and EO [Executive Order] 12333 concerns about third-party information. Any American that is chatting with other people is probably chatting with other Americans that are not part of my interest sphere.

So it is a complex thing. If you could help us figure out——

Mr. KELLY. I get all that, but you would be surprised what you can just find out with a simple Google of an individual——

Mr. REID. Yes, sir. But we——

Mr. KELLY [continuing]. Which is public information that they put out. But thank you.

And real quickly, if you can answer, please, Ms. Miller, tell us what we can do to get you the authorities.

Ms. MILLER. One of the things that we are working on right now is to expand our scope of engagement with the FBI, specifically the Domestic Terrorism Task Force and the criminal gang files.

We do a level of work with local law enforcement in the local gang activity. The information that is available at the FBI is limited to law enforcement, and so that is not necessarily information that we can provide to 20,000 recruiters across the country.

And so we have a working group right now to determine how best to share that information and at what level so that we can continue to update them real-time on emerging patterns and tattoos and markings. And so that is work that we are doing right now and, I think, will be very helpful.

Mr. KELLY. And I want to end with, guys, you are setting the standard for America, and thank you. You are doing an outstanding job. So I don't want—but I still want to get better. A guy used to say: Good, better, best; good get better, and better get best. I believe in that in everything we do.

And please look at the climate survey. I don't think you guys need our authority to ask the right questions to identify issues. And so I would just ask, either influence or do that.

And, with that, I yield back, Chairwoman.

Ms. SPEIER. All right.

Lots of food for thought here. We look forward to working with you. This is a serious issue. I think you recognize that we are taking it very seriously.

So we thank you for your contributions today and your work that you do every day.

And, with that, we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:51 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



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**A P P E N D I X**

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

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**Statement of  
Representative Jackie Speier  
Military Personnel Subcommittee  
Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military – How to Stop It?  
February 11, 2020**

The hearing will now come to order. I want to welcome everyone to this hearing of the Military Personnel subcommittee, which will examine the incidence, dangers of, and responses to white supremacy in the military.

This issue could not be more urgent. Three weeks ago a New York Times article revealed that the FBI had arrested seven members of “The Base,” a dangerous white supremacist group. These aren’t your parent’s Neo-Nazis. The Base is an accelerationist, paganistic, anarchic group whose name speaks to its admiration for Al Qaeda and ISIS. They hate Jews and African Americans sure, but they don’t like President Trump or the United States either. Their goal is to use terrorism to start a race war and collapse the United States. Triggering societal collapse may be a sick fantasy, but the reality is that domestic terror has claimed more lives than international terror since 9/11. Last week, FBI Director Wray told the Judiciary committee that he has, “[E]levate[d] racially-motivated violent extremism to a national threat priority at the same band with homegrown violent extremism and ISIS.”

Our enemies, especially Russia, exploit these racial tensions to divide and weaken American society. The head of the Base lives in Russia, Russia likely supports white supremacist groups in the United States and Europe, and Russia targets our servicemembers with disinformation. When our enemies take advantage of our vulnerabilities, our national security is threatened and dependent on a sufficient response.

The threat also has specific implications for the personnel subcommittee.

First, white supremacist terror groups and communities value military skills that would enable them to commit terrorism or fight a race war. They recruit vets to join and train their members, seek to infiltrate sympathizers into the military, and many members claim to have military experience. This doesn’t make white supremacist terror groups unique—Al Qaeda also recruited members of the Egyptian and Saudi militaries.

Second, there are several warning signs that individuals with white nationalist and supremacist tendencies are in fact serving in our military. Recent high-profile examples include a Marine attending the 2017 Charlottesville rally, a Coast Guard officer arrested with a cache of weapons, and a West Point grad espousing hate on social media. Last week, a Military Times survey showed that the number of troops who have witnessed evidence of white supremacist and racist ideologies in the military increased from 22 to 36 percent from 2018 to 2019. Like in previous decades, as supremacist activity—marked by events such as Charlottesville—has increased in recent years, it has likely increased in the

military as well, and supremacists in the military put servicemember safety, recruitment, and retention at risk

Third, I don't think the military takes this threat seriously enough, has the tools it needs, or dedicates sufficient resources to the threat. Our accessions and vetting enterprise lumps white supremacist activity in with gang affiliation, rather than treat it as a national security issue on par with foreign terror. That lack of urgency and focus trickles down to commanders and enlisted leaders, who don't appear to be sufficiently apprised of this threat or taught how to deal with it. Even if they were dealing with it, the military lacks statistics to prove it, in part because of the absence of a standalone UCMJ extremism article. This raises hard questions about whether military law enforcement need additional authorities to combat this terror threat.

Today we will be joined by two panels. The first will consist of experts from organizations that study, track, and educate on extremism. On the second, we'll have DOD officials responsible for the accessions policies for the military, counterintelligence, and law enforcement security and the Military Criminal Investigation agencies.

I would like to focus on three main concerns today:

First, what is the scope and magnitude of this threat and what are its impacts?

Second, what is being done to prevent these individuals from entering the military, and then find, investigate, and prosecute them? Do military leaders take this issue seriously enough?

Third, what additional tools might we need to give the military to combat this threat?

Before I introduce our first panel, let me offer Ranking Member Kelly an opportunity to make any opening remarks.

**Written Testimony of**

**Heidi L. Beirich, Ph.D.**

**Co-Founder**

**Global Project Against Hate and Extremism**

**Before the**

**Congress of the United States**

**House of Representatives**

**Armed Services Committee**

**Military Personnel Subcommittee**

**Regarding**

**“Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military – How to Stop It?”**

**February 11, 2020**

Chairman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and esteemed members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify. My name is Heidi Beirich. I hold a Ph.D. in political science from Purdue University and am the co-founder of the newly established Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. For two decades prior to the founding of this new organization, while serving as the director of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Intelligence Project, I and my former colleagues monitored, issued reports about, and trained law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States. We also alerted Armed Forces officials when we identified white supremacists and other extremists serving in the military. An important area of that work involved not only monitoring white supremacists in the military, but also arguing for more vigilant practices and stronger policies to root out racist extremists from the ranks. I am an expert on white supremacist movements in the United States, serving as an advisory board member of the International Network for Hate Studies, a co-founder and co-chair of the Change the Terms Coalition, which proposes policy solutions to online extremism, and the author of numerous studies on extremism as well as co-editor of *Neo-Confederacy: A Critical Introduction*. My research has been cited in hundreds of academic pieces and news articles, including on the issue of white supremacists and the military. I am honored to appear before you today.

My testimony will focus on the threat posed by racist extremists in the military and how veterans and currently serving troops have been involved in domestic terrorism and terrorist plots inspired by white supremacy. I will suggest possible policy changes to

current regulations and propose investigations into the functioning of current practices used to separate white supremacists from the military. I will also address the growing international terrorism threat posed by veterans and active duty troops holding these views. My testimony is not intended to minimize other threats to our Armed Forces, including those associated with extremist forms of Islam or gang organizations. It is also not intended to discredit in any way the millions of men and women in our Armed Forces who faithfully serve our country with such dedication. The vast majority of those who serve in our Armed Forces have no connection to white supremacy and uphold our country's deepest values. Those soldiers that are involved in extremist organizations driven by racism, or who express racist and bigoted ideas that are pushed by the white supremacist movement, sully the good name and integrity of our dedicated soldiers, pose a national security threat to our nation and an international security threat when they work with white supremacists in other countries to further these ideas. They also endanger their fellow soldiers and our military's efforts to bring peace and stability to other countries where our troops are stationed.

#### **White Supremacists in the Military: A National Security Threat**

Recruitment of active duty military and veterans has been a staple tool of white supremacist groups for decades and many former soldiers have risen to lead violent white supremacist groups in the United States after separating from the service. Military training is seen as vital to the 'coming race war' and to those who are actively working to instigate such violence.

Barring white supremacists from the military is of the utmost importance. A growing white supremacist movement, both in the United States and abroad, is increasingly violent and involved in terrorist attacks that have left dozens dead. Far-right terror is on the rise in the West, bucking the trend of declining rates of terror globally, according to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index.<sup>1</sup> The 2019 index recorded a decline in overall terrorism deaths for the fourth consecutive year, while reporting that far-right terrorism increased by 320 percent in the same time period. In 2018, total deaths globally attributed to far-right groups increased to 26. In the first nine months of 2019, 77 deaths were attributed to the far-right.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in September altered its domestic terrorism strategy to specifically address rising levels of terrorism coming from racial extremists. For the first time since it was formed after the 9/11 attacks, DHS added white supremacist violence to its list of priority threats.<sup>2</sup> I attended a joint DHS and National Counter Terrorism Center meeting in September where this growing threat and possible

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.euronews.com/2019/11/20/far-right-terrorism-on-the-rise-in-the-west-bucking-global-terror-trends>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_0920\\_plcy\\_strategic-framework-counterterrorism-targeted-violence.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-counterterrorism-targeted-violence.pdf)

legislative responses to it were discussed. One high level official speaking under Chatham House Rules, who had recently been in Europe where the far right is now seen in many countries as the number one terrorism threat, said at the meeting that “it was a shock to realize, after years of countering the dangerous export of terrorism from countries in the Middle East, that the United States may now be doing the same in its export of white supremacism.”

At the heart of these attacks are former and currently serving members of the military, who have training that makes terrorist attacks more achievable and more deadly. Many Americans remember that Timothy McVeigh, who committed the largest terrorist attack prior to 9/11 in terms of the numbers killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, was a former soldier. The same was true of Eric Rudolph, an antisemite and racist who perpetrated the Olympic Park bombing in 1996. And of Wade Michael Page, who committed a mass shooting at a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin in 2012.

In recent months, several members of a particularly violent neo-Nazi organization, Atomwaffen, have been found to be on active duty while simultaneously spreading their training and ideas to violent white supremacists in the U.S. and other countries. And in just the last few months, active duty white supremacists have been arrested for planning domestic terrorist plots, further evidence that this is an enduring problem that needs constant attention to fulfill the Armed Services commitment to being free of white supremacy and other racist ideologies. These racist soldiers also are a threat to currently serving troops of color, who can be subjected to hate crimes and other forms of abuse by racists, and to civilians in the many areas of the world where our troops serve.

This commitment has been publicly and repeatedly stated by military leaders. After the violent white supremacist protests in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017, which featured both active duty white supremacists and veterans, then Joint Chiefs Chairman General Joseph Dunford said, “there is no place for racism and bigotry in the U.S. military or in the United States as a whole.”<sup>3</sup> Then-Secretary of Defense James Mattis said the military is a “widely diverse force” that does not tolerate extremism and hatred.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, it appears that the Armed Forces are falling far short in rooting out extremists, and when they fail to do so, these extremists re-enter civil society trained in how to effectively perpetrate violence. According to New America, 21 military veterans were identified as having committed or attempted an act of violence as a right-wing extremist between 2001 and 2013.<sup>5</sup> Some of these veterans were radicalized before or

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.wsj.com/articles/joint-chiefs-chairman-denounces-racism-and-bigotry-after-charlottesville-violence-1502958047>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.newsweek.com/how-common-white-nationalism-military-congressman-urges-investigation-914430>

<sup>5</sup> <https://psmag.com/social-justice/does-the-american-military-have-a-problem-with-far-right-extremism>

during military service, and others joined the movement after leaving the military. There should be no possibility of such radicalization while active in the Armed Forces.

The Armed Services' own soldiers know that white supremacy in the ranks is a serious problem. A *Military Times* poll in 2017 found that nearly 25 percent of actively serving military personnel have encountered white nationalism and racism in the Armed Forces.<sup>6</sup> Active duty troops were about 1.3 million at the time, meaning some 325,000 soldiers had encountered white nationalism in some form. Follow up surveys in 2018 and 2019 by the same publication found substantially the same troubling results.<sup>7</sup>

Other evidence of lack of attention to this issue exists in terms of the manner in which hate crimes perpetrated by active-duty troops are reported, or rather not reported. A 2017 report by ProPublica found that the Pentagon was not providing data on hate crimes to the FBI as required by law.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the level of hate crime that may exist in the Armed Forces is unknown. This is unacceptable and needs to be rectified.

The only concrete evidence the military has provided on the dimensions of this problem is a response to a May 2018 letter written by then-U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), who now is the attorney general of Minnesota, to Defense Secretary James Mattis expressing concern about this problem and requesting details on the Pentagon's efforts to rid the ranks of white supremacists.<sup>9</sup> Replying to Ellison, the Defense Department said that it had received "27 reports of extremist activity (domestic) by Service members over the past five years." Military officials, the letter continued, had investigated 25 of these reports; ultimately, 18 service members from across the military had been disciplined or forced out of the armed forces.<sup>10</sup> The nature of the extremism of the troops in question was not documented.

The low number reported to Ellison in comparison to other evidence about white supremacy in the military indicates that efforts to identify extremism in the ranks are not thorough enough at this time. The low numbers may also relate to an attitude in the Armed Forces that such activity is small and thus not of great importance. In a 2019 *New York Times* report, Carter F. Smith, who served as an Army criminal investigator for 30

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/10/23/military-times-poll-one-in-four-troops-sees-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/09/12/lawmakers-want-closer-tracking-of-white-supremacy-nazi-sympathizers-in-the-military/>; <https://news.yahoo.com/signs-white-supremacy-extremism-again-100042578.html>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.propublica.org/article/more-100-federal-agencies-fail-report-hate-crimes-fbi-national-database>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.rolcall.com/news/politics/ellison-wants-answers-about-white-supremacy-in-the-military>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>

years before joining the faculty of Middle Tennessee State University, was quoted as saying that the military does not make this issue a priority.<sup>11</sup>

“They always say the numbers are small, and because of that, it is not a priority,” Smith told the *Times*. “Well, the numbers might be small, but they are like a drop of cyanide in your drink. They can do a lot of damage.” Smith also said that the military is required to prepare a report each year on domestic extremists serving, but that it has no law enforcement body to monitor extremist networks or to collect data on the problem. Smith’s conclusion: “So every year they get a report based on what they were never looking for” and the data only includes a small number of cases that arise outside organically because there is no investigatory body dedicated to the problem.

The government should conduct an in-depth investigation of this problem to evaluate the adequacy of the policies and procedures currently in place to tackle it.

On a positive note, a new legal requirement passed last year requiring the Pentagon to revise its command climate surveys of active-duty soldiers to ask whether they have seen “extremist activity” in the workplace may lead to better information on the extent of these problems in the military.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, an amendment from the House that was included in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act mandating the surveys include an examination of white nationalism and white supremacy specifically was stripped by the Senate.<sup>13</sup> This specific language should nevertheless be included in climate surveys if possible so a more accurate set of data on the problem can be compiled.

### **White Supremacists in the Military: Recent History**

There have been dozens of arrests in recent years of active duty and veteran white supremacists for a variety of crimes including planning and engaging in domestic terrorist attacks and murder.

In January 2020, the FBI arrested three men from the neo-Nazi group, The Base, which is the English translation for Al-Qaeda. The men, who were arrested on charges that range from illegal transport of a machine gun to harboring aliens, had “malicious plans,” according to federal officials, to disrupt a gun rights rally that was held on Jan. 20

<sup>11</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/military-white-nationalists-extremists.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>12</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/06/signs-of-white-supremacy-extremism-up-again-in-poll-of-active-duty-troops/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/06/lawmaker-wants-more-tools-confront-white-supremacy-military.html>

in Richmond, Va.<sup>14</sup> Two of the men had previous military training: Brian Mark Lemley was a cavalry scout in the Army and Patrik Jordan Mathews previously served as a combat engineer in the Canadian Army Reserve, indicating that the reach of white nationalism is a problem for foreign military services as well. According to court documents, these men discussed “recruitment, creating a white ethno-state, committing acts of violence against minority communities (including African-Americans and Jewish-Americans), the organization’s military-style training camps, and ways to make improvised explosive devices.”<sup>15</sup> Other members of the group were arrested at around the same time for a plot to murder a couple involved in anti-racist activities in Georgia. Notably, the founder of The Base, Rinaldo Nizzaro, lives in Russia, furthering the international dimension of this case.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the best-known recent example of extremists in the military was disclosed in February 2019, when Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Hasson was arrested. A former active-duty Marine and member of the Army Guard, Hasson was found to be plotting a mass murder of elected officials of the Democratic party and media figures.<sup>17</sup> After seizing his computer and other electronic devices, investigators found evidence that Hasson was a long-time white supremacist who held violently racist views even before his first enlistment in the military. He was sentenced last month to 13 years in prison.

There were many similar cases in 2019. In April, Master Sergeant Cory Reeves was identified as a member of the white supremacist group Identity Evropa. He was only demoted one rank after an initial investigation. In December, proceedings into his activities opened with the possibility of discharge.<sup>18</sup> He remains employed by the Air Force. In September, the FBI arrested Jarrett William Smith, a soldier stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, and charged him with providing expertise to extremists that could lead to the creation of explosives and weapons of mass destruction.<sup>19</sup> He was interacting with a member of a neo-fascist Ukrainian group, the Right Sector, and was interested in fighting in Ukraine. The FBI said Smith discussed in an online chat a plan to conduct an attack within the United States. Smith was reportedly searching for more “radicals” like himself and discussed killing members of an anti-fascist network as well as destroying cell towers or a local news station. Later he suggested a major American news network as a target of a vehicle bomb. In December, two men were kicked out of the Georgia National Guard after they were reported to be leaders of the racist pagan group, Ravensblood Kindred,

<sup>14</sup><https://www.npr.org/2020/01/16/797041211/fbi-arrests-3-alleged-members-of-white-supremacist-group-ahead-of-richmond-rally>

<sup>15</sup><https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=6658688-The-Base-Lemley-Mathews-Bilbrough-Arrests>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51236915>

<sup>17</sup><https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/inside-u-s-military-s-battle-white-supremacy-far-right-ncna1010221>

<sup>18</sup><https://www.denverpost.com/2019/12/17/air-force-identity-evropa-cory-reeves/>

<sup>19</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/us/us-army-soldier-arrested-Jarrett-William-Smith.html>

part of the larger white supremacist Asatru Folk Assembly.<sup>20</sup> According to press reports, the men had attended a speaking event by white nationalist Richard Spencer in 2017, and one of them was on active duty in Afghanistan when his ties to white supremacy were disclosed.

In November 2019, when the chat logs for Iron March, a neo-fascist, antisemitic and racist forum run by a Russian national, were leaked, active duty military were found to be participating.<sup>21</sup> Iron March ultimately birthed Atomwaffen, a violent neo-Nazi organization whose members are connected to multiple murders and terrorism plots. On Iron March, an anonymous poster identified himself as part of the Marine Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps and asked about Atomwaffen. Another poster claimed to be in the Navy and wrote, "Be careful if you get deployed with those [deleted] sand [deleted] and jews... They are all a bunch of slippery pieces of [deleted] that wash their faces in rain puddles in dirt on the ground."<sup>22</sup> In other posts, an artilleryman outlined his background and political views in response to questions posed by the co-founder of the British neo-Nazi group National Action, who served as an administrator on Iron March. The organization has been banned in Britain as a terrorist organization, the first since WWII.<sup>23</sup>

Also in 2019, the *Huffington Post* exposed seven members of the U.S. military actively posting on a Discord chatroom as part of the white nationalist organization Identity Evropa.<sup>24</sup> They included two Marines, two Army ROTC cadets, an Army physician, a member of the Texas National Guard and one member of the Air Force.

It is unlikely that this is anywhere near a comprehensive list of white supremacists on active duty or in the National Guard, and it is instructive that many of these cases were exposed by entities other than the military or federal officials. It is unclear how many such investigations the military itself has undertaken, other than the data given to former Rep. Ellison. It's hard to know the true extent of the problem of white supremacists in the military since there is no specific requirement for the Pentagon to collect data on those expelled for white supremacist activity, to disclose the number of such investigations, or anything else related to this problem. The lack of transparency is a serious problem in itself because providing white supremacists with training on weapons, bombs, and

<sup>20</sup><https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/2-men-kicked-out-national-guard-over-alleged-white-supremacist-n1107591>

<sup>21</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/11/07/desire-to-join-military-large-focus-of-leaked-chats-in-infamous-neo-nazi-forum/>

<sup>22</sup><https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2019/11/massive-data-dump-exposes-members-of-website-for-violent-white-supremacists/>

<sup>23</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/12/neo-nazi-group-national-action-banned-by-uk-home-secretary>

<sup>24</sup>[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa\\_n\\_5c8ab70ae4b0d7f6b0f1094b](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa_n_5c8ab70ae4b0d7f6b0f1094b)

strategies for pursuing lethal attacks makes them potentially deadly to the American public and a serious national and international security threat.

#### **The Atomwaffen Division: A Case Study in Failing to Root Out Extremism**

In 2018, Marine Lance Corporal Vasillios G. Pistoris, was expelled from the Marine Corps for his ties to the neo-Nazi Atomwaffen Division (AWD). He was removed after participating in the Charlottesville riots in 2017, where he was engaged in violent assaults. Pistoris later bragged about his involvement online with other members of AWD.<sup>25</sup> This group, whose name in German means nuclear weapons, would ultimately have members involved in multiple U.S. murders, planning terrorist attacks, and the creation of a hit list and sending death threats to German politicians it targeted for assassination. AWD has international reach, with chapters in England, Canada, Germany and the Baltic states.

Pistoris's expulsion was widely reported, but the details of the arrest of the leader of the group, Brandon Russell, are much less widely known and paint a troubling picture of how the military handles white supremacists in its ranks. A lengthy ProPublica report provided the details.<sup>26</sup> In 2017, Russell was arrested after one of his roommates, Devon Arthurs, killed two of his other roommates in a Tampa apartment. Investigators on the scene discovered a cache of weapons, detonators and volatile chemical compounds, including a cooler full of HMTD, a powerful explosive often used by bombmakers, and ammonium nitrate, the substance used by McVeigh in the Oklahoma City attack. Russell was also in possession of two radioactive isotopes, americium and thorium.

At the time of his arrest, Russell had been serving in the 53rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion of Florida's Army National Guard. Arthurs told investigators after his arrest that Russell had signed up for the Guard in part to receive combat training he might put to use for AWD. Russell had been drilling with the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team on the day of the murders. In his own interview with Tampa police, Russell said he expected his unit to be deployed in 2018 and was considering the Army as a career.

While Arthurs was rightly taken to jail and booked on homicide charges, police and FBI agents released Russell, who claimed that he used the explosives to power model rockets. An officer even drove Russell back to the murder scene to get his car. Within hours, Russell acquired an AR-15-style assault rifle and a bolt-action hunting rifle. He loaded homemade body armor and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition into his car and headed to the Florida Keys with another AWD member. Sheriff's deputies in Monroe

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<sup>25</sup><https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2018/08/01/marine-with-alleged-neo-nazi-connections-booted-from-the-marine-corps/>

<sup>26</sup>Most of the details in regards to this case come from this story: <https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>. ProPublica in collaboration with Frontline did the most thorough reporting on this case and the military response to the events.

County ultimately arrested him and were stunned by the weapons and ammunition in his car. There was no luggage in the vehicle. In September 2017, Russell pleaded guilty to a single charge of unlawful possession of explosives and was later sentenced to five years in federal prison.

After Russell's arrest, the Florida Guard mounted an investigation into his activities while in uniform. Just three weeks after Russell was jailed, the Guard wrapped up its inquiry and issued a report. This listed a few red flags in regards to Russell: that he had a tattoo of the Atomwaffen logo on his right shoulder, two of his superiors had warned him about his conduct after he repeatedly "vocalized his hatred for homosexuality and 'faggots,'" and Russell had "seemed very anxious to receive body armor, and keep his military issued gear."<sup>27</sup>

The investigation concluded that Russell had not sought to recruit other soldiers for AWD, and that he "did not present consistent characteristics that would have led a reasonable person to suspect Russell held such radical beliefs." Investigators determined there had been no negligence in allowing Russell into the Guard or in his continued presence in its ranks. Perhaps most troubling when it comes to the process of identifying white supremacist recruits, the investigator on the case noted that the U.S. military did not maintain a database of tattoos that might have been used to screen for troubling affiliations.

The two-page summary of the investigation, obtained by ProPublica and Frontline, contained no references to Arthurs' statements to authorities about other possible AWD members in the military. It also did not contain any evidence that the Guard had alerted officials in other military branches to the potential presence of AWD members. The Pentagon did not respond to repeated requests from ProPublica and Frontline to discuss Atomwaffen and its possible recruitment of current or former military members.

In a statement, a Pentagon spokeswoman, Major Carla Gleason of the Air Force, said: "The DoD uses a multi-level approach to learn as much as possible about potential new soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines so we can assess whether they should be extended the privilege to serve in the military. While we can't guarantee that every person who enters the service will be free from holding extremist thoughts, various screening tools provide us the best opportunity to identify those who do not share our values."

This story is highly concerning on multiple levels. It shows a lack of coordination among military branches and with Guard units about investigating possible Atomwaffen members in the ranks, a lack of interest about claims that Russell may have been recruiting other individuals into the group, and discloses the fact that there is no tattoo database being used to screen out extremists. The biggest concern is the finding that the

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<sup>27</sup><https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>

Florida Army National Guard was not negligent in failing to recognize Russell as a potential threat.

Unfortunately, these stories are far from isolated events. Here are more examples of extremists found in the ranks in recent years:

- A 2014 Vice News video report showed the KKK was actively seeking to recruit U.S. military veterans, and a few were answering their call.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2013, John Charles Stortstrom, a mechanical engineer who worked for the Army at its Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) in Maryland, was suspended after published reports disclosed that he was among 150 white nationalists who attended a conference of the white nationalist American Renaissance, a race science outfit. American Renaissance included a photo on its website of Stortstrom with the caption, “Engineer. Republican. Racist. Military bomb maker.”<sup>29</sup>
- In 2012, a member of the Missouri National Guard was arrested for running and supplying weapons to a neo-Nazi paramilitary training camp in Florida.<sup>30</sup> Two other soldiers were arrested after murdering a former soldier and his girlfriend in an attempt to cover up their assassination plot against then-President Barack Obama.<sup>31</sup> Also in 2012, a Marine Corps scout sniper team in Afghanistan posed with a Nazi SS flag.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2009, Marine Lance Corporal Kody Brittingham, stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was arrested on an armed robbery charge. A search of his barracks turned up a journal containing white supremacist material and a plan to kill Obama.<sup>33</sup>
- Also in 2009, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported on leaked private emails of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM). The emails showed that several people who identified themselves as active military personnel contacted NSM over the prior two years to express interest in the organization, including at least one soldier who subsequently joined.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXIYQxMN9-4>

<sup>29</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2013/07/08/after-hatewatch-story-maryland-military-engineer-suspended>

<sup>30</sup><https://theweek.com/articles/833960/american-militarys-extremist-problem>

<sup>31</sup><https://psmag.com/social-justice/does-the-american-military-have-a-problem-with-far-right-extremism>

<sup>32</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/09/us-military-marines-nazi-ss-flag-photo>

<sup>33</sup>[https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/former-lejeune-marine-charged-with-threatening-obama/article\\_0c645db5-0529-53ad-aaaa-e1ed3f7cf96b.html](https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/former-lejeune-marine-charged-with-threatening-obama/article_0c645db5-0529-53ad-aaaa-e1ed3f7cf96b.html)

<sup>34</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2009/09/03/leaked-neo-nazi-e-mails-show-contacts-military-personnel>

- In 2008, the SPLC issued a report revealing that 46 members of the neo-Nazi web forum New Saxon had identified themselves as active-duty military personnel. It quoted a racist skinhead who wrote that he had joined the Army and specifically requested an assignment where he would be able to learn how to make an explosive device.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2007, two Army privates in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., received six-year prison sentences for attempting to sell body armor and morphine to an undercover FBI agent they believed was involved in the white supremacist movement.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2006, an SPLC report showed that a number of military personnel had joined racist and neo-Nazi groups such as the Fourth Reich, Aryan Nation, National Alliance, National Socialist Movement, and others.<sup>37</sup>
- Also in 2006, the leader of the Celtic Knights planned to obtain firearms and explosives from an active-duty Army soldier in Fort Hood, Texas. The soldier, who served in Iraq in 2006 and 2007, was a member of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2003, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division advised the FBI of six active-duty soldiers at Fort Riley, Texas, who were affiliated with the Aryan Nations. One was the neo-Nazi group's point of contact in Kansas and sought to recruit members from within the military.<sup>39</sup>

Again, these cases are by no means exhaustive.

#### **White Supremacy & the Military: A Well-Documented Problem**

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<sup>35</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/evidence-shows-racist-skinheads-enlisting-military>

<sup>36</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/fbi-reports-extremists-military>

<sup>37</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/several-high-profile-racist-extremists-serve-us-military>

<sup>38</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/evidence-shows-racist-skinheads-enlisting-military>

<sup>39</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2003/fbi-reports-extremists-military>

Active military personnel are well aware of this problem and polling by the *Military Times* in 2017<sup>40</sup>, 2018<sup>41</sup> and 2019<sup>42</sup>, indicates that white nationalist views appeared widespread. In the 2019 poll released on February 6, 2020, the publication reported that more than one-third of all active-duty troops and more than half of minority service members say they have personally witnessed examples of “white nationalism or ideologically-driven racism within the ranks.” The poll surveyed 1,630 active-duty troops. As in prior years, troops responding to the poll indicated white nationalism is a greater security threat than extremist strains of Islam or other threats. Poll participants reported witnessing racist language, swastikas drawn on service members’ cars, tattoos affiliated with white supremacist groups, stickers supporting the Klan and Nazi-style salutes.

In the *Military Times*’ 2018 poll, which included responses from nearly 900 active-duty troops, 22 percent of service members who participated said they had seen signs of white nationalism or racist ideology within the armed forces. Among minority service members polled, incidents of racism and racist ideology increased from 42 percent in 2017 to more than half those surveyed in 2018. Respondents cited casual use of racial slurs and antisemitic language, display of the Confederate flag despite complaints from other troops, swastikas drawn in bathrooms in combat zones, and tattoos known to be connected with white supremacy. It should be noted that were this behavior to occur in a civilian workplace, such incidents would be seen as contributing to a hostile workplace environment. The paper reported that an anonymous service member wrote, “I have several colleagues who have said they are ‘alt-right,’ and that they had made, “very clear statements of strong hatred against blacks, Muslims, Hispanics and immigrants in general. They punish others by withholding favorable assignments, actions, etc.”

In their 2017 poll, *Military Times* found that concerns about white nationalist groups and beliefs were reported by about a quarter of those responding. This view was more pronounced among minorities. Nearly 42 percent of non-white troops who responded to the survey said they had personally experienced examples of white nationalism in the military, versus about 18 percent of white service members. Respondents cited white nationalists as a bigger threat to national security than those emanating from Syria and Iraq.

The 2017 poll revealed other disturbing data. Some respondents seemed blasé about the problem. “White nationalism is not a terrorist organization,” wrote one Navy

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<sup>40</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/10/23/military-times-poll-one-in-four-troops-sees-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>

<sup>41</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/28/white-nationalism-remains-a-problem-for-the-military-poll-shows/>

<sup>42</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/06/signs-of-white-supremacy-extremism-up-again-in-poll-of-active-duty-troops/>

commander, who declined to give his name. “You do realize white nationalists and racists are two totally different types of people?” wrote another anonymous Air Force staff sergeant.

Federal agencies have also documented this problem. In 2008, the FBI published “White Supremacist Recruitment of Military Personnel since 9/11.”<sup>43</sup> The report detailed more than a dozen investigative findings and criminal cases involving veterans and active duty personnel engaging in extremist activity and found just over 200 identifiable neo-Nazis with military training. A 2009 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) report further warned that the combination of the election of the first African American president, a downturn in the economy, and an influx of unemployed vets returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan were potential flashpoints, and that military personnel and veterans were being targeted by far-right extremist groups.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, this report created a political firestorm among politicians, conservative commentators and veterans groups. As a result, it was rescinded by DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, and the Obama administration subsequently did little to address the issue.

#### **Military Regulations and White Supremacy: An Uneven Response to the Seriousness of the Problem**

Dealing with the issue of white supremacy in the ranks has long been a work in progress. As cases of extremism come to light, the military often tightens regulations after refusing for a period of time to admit the seriousness of the problem. There have been rounds of reforms over recent decades, and bipartisan support to fight this problem. But recent cases of extremists make clear that the current policies, resources and investigative priorities are not strong enough to root out a growing problem that is contributing to domestic terrorism, and, increasingly, international terrorism inspired by white supremacy.

In 1986, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) wrote to then-Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to turn over evidence that active-duty Marines stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina were providing equipment and paramilitary training to a violent Ku Klux Klan group.<sup>45</sup> Weinberger responded by issuing a directive stating that military personnel must “reject participation in white supremacy, neo-Nazi and other such groups which espouse or attempt to create overt discrimination.” Unfortunately, many commanders interpreted that order to mean that while active participation in extremist groups was prohibited, so-called “passive support,” such as distributing propaganda, listening to hate rock, and “mere membership” were still allowed. In 1995, after racist murders were perpetrated by soldiers serving at Fort Bragg, the Pentagon

<sup>43</sup><https://documents.law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/White%20Supremacist%20Recruitment%20of%20Military%20Personnel%20Since%209-11-ocr.pdf>

<sup>44</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/us/politics/white-supremacy-homeland-security.html>

<sup>45</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/extremists-military-longstanding-problem>

toughened military policy again to read, “Engaging in activities in relation to [extremist] organizations, or in furtherance of the objectives of such organizations that are viewed by command to be detrimental to the good order of the unit is incompatible with Military Service, and is, therefore, prohibited.”<sup>46</sup>

Then-Defense Secretary William Perry used even stronger language to describe the intent of the updated regulation. “Department of Defense policy leaves no room for racist and extremist activities in the military,” Perry stated. “We must -- and we shall -- make every effort to erase bigotry, racism, and extremism from the military. Extremist activity compromises fairness, good order, and discipline. The armed forces, which defend the nation and its values, must exemplify those values beyond question.”<sup>47</sup>

In 2006, the SPLC revealed that large numbers of neo-Nazis had infiltrated the ranks.<sup>48</sup> The report blamed relaxed wartime recruiting standards and ambiguous regulations. It quoted a military investigator who said he had identified and submitted evidence on 320 extremists at Fort Lewis in Washington state but that only two had been discharged.<sup>49</sup> It also cited the case of Matt Buschbacher, a Navy SEAL who attended the 2002 leadership conference of the neo-Nazi National Alliance while on active duty. The SPLC alerted military officials to Buschbacher’s activities, but he was allowed to complete a tour of duty in Iraq and given an honorable discharge.

The SPLC, along with 40 members of Congress, urged then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to adopt a “zero tolerance” policy toward white supremacists. But the Pentagon did nothing.<sup>50</sup> Two years later, in 2008, the SPLC issued a new report revealing that 46 members of the neo-Nazi web forum New Saxon had identified themselves as active-duty military personnel.<sup>51</sup> Again, the Pentagon denied there was a problem and refused to act.

With no apparent action being taken by the Pentagon, in July 2009 the SPLC appealed to Congress to investigate. In a letter to committee chairmen with oversight over homeland security and the armed services, the SPLC presented dozens of additional profiles of active-duty military personnel on the neo-Nazi New Saxon forum.<sup>52</sup> Those profiles included an individual who wrote that he was about to be deployed with the Air Force overseas and was looking forward to “killing all the bloody sand n\*\*\*\*\*!”

<sup>46</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/extremists-military-longstanding-problem>

<sup>47</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/several-high-profile-racist-extremists-serve-us-military>

<sup>48</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/several-high-profile-racist-extremists-serve-us-military>

<sup>49</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/extremists-military-longstanding-problem>

<sup>50</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/extremists-military-longstanding-problem>

<sup>51</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/evidence-shows-racist-skinheads-enlisting-military>

<sup>52</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2010/04/13/pentagon-tightens-ban-supremacist-activity-after-years-denying-problem>

Another proclaimed Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as one of his favorite books. Many of the profiles included pictures of the posters in military uniform.

After arguing for some time that its “zero-tolerance” policy had been sufficient to keep white supremacists out of the military, in 2009 the military quietly altered its regulations to state that military personnel “must not actively advocate supremacist doctrine, ideology or causes” or “otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.” The new rules specified that “active participation” would now include activities such as recruiting, fundraising, demonstrating or rallying, training, organizing and distributing supremacist material, including online posts.<sup>53</sup>

Even with these tightened regulations, many gaps persist particularly in terms of the priority given to these types of investigations and the willingness of unit commanders to take the problem seriously. In an interview with ProPublica and Frontline in 2018, a former Marine then working for a government intelligence agency said that the military’s seriousness about combating white supremacists in its ranks can vary.<sup>54</sup> “At the command level — and publicly — the military takes any extremism seriously,” the ex-Marine said. “There is a zero-tolerance policy regarding Nazis. We defeated them in World War II, and they have no business currently serving in the U.S. military.” But he added, “At the unit level, I believe there’s a willful ignorance...’If neo-Nazis aren’t allowed to enlist in the military, and if nobody I know is a neo-Nazi, there must not be any within my unit’ seems to be the standard. It’s difficult to take seriously that which you don’t believe exists.”

For their reporting, ProPublica and Frontline interviewed more than 20 officials with direct knowledge of the military’s handling of felony-level criminal investigations. Most said racial extremists were a low priority for military police and detectives in military law enforcement units like the Army Criminal Investigation Division and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, which polices the Navy and Marine Corps. Military investigators are more focused on street gangs operating within the armed forces, sexual assault and illegal drugs, the officials said.<sup>55</sup>

A concrete example of placing such issues as low priority involves AWD. Roughly a year after the group’s founder Brandon Russell’s 2018 arrest in Tampa, an Army investigator told ProPublica and Frontline that the Army’s CID unit had not opened an investigation into Russell and his neo-Nazi organization. Several military

<sup>53</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2010/04/13/pentagon-tightens-ban-supremacist-activity-after-years-denying-problem>; <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2010/pentagon-stiffens-regulations-ban-racist-advocacy>

<sup>54</sup><https://www.pbs.org/wqbh/frontline/article/ranks-of-notorious-hate-group-include-active-duty-military/>

<sup>55</sup><https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>

officials said Army CID had no jurisdiction in Russell's case because he was a member of the Florida Guard and not an active-duty soldier.

This lack of appropriate priorities at the unit level and within the military's investigative arms may explain why the Department of Defense found such a low number of extremists—only 27 reports in five years--in the ranks per its letter to then-Rep. Ellison.

On a related point, the military, like all federal agencies, is required to provide information on hate crimes to the FBI. Data on these crimes could help officials to understand the racial climate and threats to minority troops posed by racist soldiers. A 2017 report by ProPublica found that the Department of Defense was not providing the data, as required by law, to the FBI.<sup>56</sup> In fact, ProPublica found that no criminal data of any kind was being shared. ProPublica noted that in 2014 an internal probe by the Pentagon found that the "DoD is not reporting criminal incident data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for including in the annual Uniform Crime Reports." When ProPublica asked for clarification of this issue in 2017, a Pentagon spokesman told the publication, "We have no additional information at this time."

#### **Rooting out White Supremacy in the Ranks: Recommendations for Stronger Measures**

##### *The need to forcefully speak out against white supremacy*

There has long been bipartisan consensus that allowing white supremacists in the military is unacceptable and dangerous to the American public the Armed Forces are sworn to protect. As Republican Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) wrote in a letter to the Pentagon in 2006, "Military extremists present an elevated threat both to their fellow servicemembers and the public. We witnessed with Timothy McVeigh that today's racist extremist may become tomorrow's domestic terrorist. Of all the institutions in our society, the U.S. military is the absolute last place extremists can be permitted to exist."<sup>57</sup>

In recent years, this same sentiment has been stated publicly by secretaries of defense and other high-level defense and national security officials, some quoted here. But concerns about the danger of white nationalism have been downplayed by our Commander-in-Chief and the head of the Armed Forces, President Donald Trump. In an interview after the massacre at two mosques in New Zealand in 2019 by a white supremacist, President Trump was asked if he saw an increase globally in the threat of white nationalism. He replied, "I don't really. I think it's a small group of people that

<sup>56</sup><https://www.propublica.org/article/more-100-federal-agencies-fail-report-hate-crimes-fbi-national-database>

<sup>57</sup><https://www.splcenter.org/news/2006/07/21/sen-shelby-asks-rumsfeld-oust-racist-extremists-military>

have very, very serious problems. I guess, if you look at what happened in New Zealand, perhaps that's a case. I don't know enough about it yet."<sup>58</sup>

It is imperative that President Trump join with his military commanders and speak out forcefully in support of regulations to screen out or expel white supremacists from the military. Having the Commander-in-Chief reiterate this point will resonate down the ranks and highlight the importance of keeping extremists out of the military. The Congress has already demanded that Trump be forceful on this point in the bipartisan, unanimous resolution passed by Congress in 2017 after the deadly Charlottesville racist riots that condemned "White nationalism, White Supremacy, and neo-Nazism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States." The resolution required the president and his administration "use all resources available to the President and the President's cabinet to address the growing prevalence of those hate groups in the United States." Using all resources available to root out white supremacy from the Armed Forces is of the utmost importance for any Administration.

Given the Charlottesville resolution, it was unfortunate that the Senate cut out a reference to "white nationalism" from a measure in this year's National Defense Authorization Act. The military spending bill had included a House provision which was intended to explicitly address the threat of white nationalists in the military and included a section devoted to assessing the extent of this problem in the Armed Forces through climate surveys. The final version of the bill, passed by the Senate and sent to President Donald Trump for his signature, only required the Department of Defense to monitor for "extremist and gang-related activity," rather than specifically referencing white nationalism.

*Need for stronger screening measures*

As the Atomwaffen case illustrates, the military still does not have strong enough screening mechanisms for recruits. There is no tattoo database to draw on, which is an absolute must. And there are no clearly laid out mechanisms to investigate the social media accounts of prospective recruits. As much evidence as there is today in the public domain about an individual's online extremism, this is a likely avenue for exploration in terms of tightening up recruiting policies and ensuring an environment free of white supremacy once individuals join the service.

In this context, it is important to note that military personnel do not have the same free speech rights as civilians, military courts have ruled. "(A) lower standard for dangerous speech unprotected by the First Amendment pertains in the military context," the military's highest court ruled in 2008, "where dangerous speech is that speech that

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<sup>58</sup><https://time.com/5552850/donald-trump-white-nationalism-global-threat-new-zealand/>

interferes with or prevents the orderly accomplishment of the mission or presents a clear danger to loyalty, discipline, mission or morale of the troops.”<sup>59</sup>

Given that social media accounts are now requested by DHS for visa and other immigration applications from individuals who are highly unlikely to pose a threat to the country, a policy that my new project does not support, surely such an accounting would be in order for those enlisting in the armed services where the threat of white supremacy to our national security and our fellow citizens is far higher. Additionally, it may be wise to consider how the online activities of active duty troops are monitored. The Hassan case, which could have led to murders or a major terrorist attack had he not been caught, reminds us that the trail to such attacks usually is found online.

Currently, military recruits are required to undergo psychological and health tests and fill out a lengthy questionnaire that asks whether they’ve ever been a member of an organization “dedicated to terrorism,” one that advocates for violence, or commits violence with the goal of discouraging others from exercising their constitutional rights. Unfortunately, this process relies heavily on self-reporting and it is unclear how that self-reporting is verified if at all. Also, members of white supremacist groups may not view their activity as related to terrorism, which could undermine the intent of the question in the first place. The nature of the tests that are given should be examined to evaluate whether they are uncovering views related to white supremacy.

In terms of recruitment policies, Capt. Joseph Butterfield, a communications officer at Marine Corps headquarters told Vice News, they have a “multi-layered policy-based approach to screening new and potential Marines for aberrant thinking and behavior.”<sup>60</sup> Prospective recruits undergo several one-on-one interviews with officers at different levels of command. Their tattoos are “screened for content to ensure it is not indicative of a gang or extremist affiliation.” Finally, recruits and candidates are observed by a team of drill instructors, Butterfield said. These procedures, too, should be investigated for effectiveness. Given that the military appears to have no internal database on tattoos, this may be an ineffective enterprise depending on how those evaluating tattoos are trained.

*Need for more rigorous enforcement procedures and the collection of data on how enforcement is applied*

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<sup>59</sup><https://www.stripes.com/news/neo-nazis-excluded-from-military-service-by-policy-but-concerns-persist-1.483558>

<sup>60</sup>[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/d3aq8a/exclusive-a-us-marine-used-the-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-to-recruit-for-a-race-war](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/d3aq8a/exclusive-a-us-marine-used-the-neo-nazi-site-iron-march-to-recruit-for-a-race-war)

One problem with the current regulations is that penalties are left largely up to commanders, usually at the unit level, and can include a range of outcomes, such as reprimand, loss of security clearance or discharge from service. For example, Navy reservist Jack Posobiec, who pushed the Pizzagate conspiracy that prominent democrats were running a child sex ring from a pizza parlor in Washington, D.C., only had his security clearance stripped after making light of the Charlottesville violence in 2017.<sup>61</sup> This example shows how there is far too much flexibility in outcomes. And the lack of documented evidence of the problem, which could help identify trends and squash the rise of white supremacists in the military, is an additional problem.

A similar issue is found in the Marine Corps--and likely across the services though there is little in the public domain about this issue. Yvonne Carlock, a spokeswoman with Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs, told *Marine Corps Times* in 2019 that there is no separation code that allows the Marines to track the number of people expelled for ties to white supremacist groups. That is because Marines are often removed for failure to abide by a regulation, and there is no requirement to record whether removal was related to white supremacy. The nature of the data then makes it difficult to know exactly how entrenched the problem is. Even more problematic is that unit commanders are not required to bring these problems to the attention of the chain of command. "Commanders and Marines alike have the responsibility and opportunity to bring allegations of misconduct to the attention of their chain of command and/or law enforcement personnel for proper investigation and disposition," Carlock said.<sup>62</sup> But that is voluntary. It should be mandatory.

At this point, military regulations provide that groups that advocate for "illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity or national origin" are forbidden to be military troops. So are groups that advocate "the use of force, violence or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights." Active participation includes fundraising, demonstrating, rallying, recruiting, training, organizing or leading members, distributing material, including posting online, and having tattoos associated with such gangs or organizations, according to Lt. Col. Paul Haverstick, a Defense Department spokesman.<sup>63</sup>

These regulations are strong, but if they are not enforced in a systematic manner, then they only serve as paper tigers. An investigation of how enforcement works in the military and the priority it is given by investigators and unit commanders is advised to determine the effectiveness of these regulations.

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<sup>61</sup><https://www.militarytimes.com/2017/08/17/navy-strips-security-clearance-from-officer-who-tweeted-about-charlottesville/>

<sup>62</sup><https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/09/04/the-neo-nazi-boot-inside-one-marines-descent-into-extremism/>

<sup>63</sup><https://www.stripes.com/news/neo-nazis-excluded-from-military-service-by-policy-but-concerns-persist-1.483558>

*Need for mandatory reporting on the extent of white supremacy in the military*

In January, when the Senate cut the phrase “white nationalist” from the National Defense Authorization Act, it also cut out an opportunity to be more proactive on this problem. The phrase was included in an amendment introduced by Rep. Aguilar (D-Calif.) in response to reports such as those included in this testimony about the rising tide of white nationalists in the military. The House of Representatives approved the amendment, which required the secretary of defense to “study the feasibility” of screening for “individuals with ties to white nationalist organizations.”<sup>64</sup>

Rep. Aguilar said in a statement to CNN, “We know that white nationalist extremists are actively trying to enlist in our military, and we know they are doing so to acquire combat and weapons training.” The original amendment rightly created a mandate for military officials to more closely track and respond to incidents of white supremacy in the ranks, a mandate that should be revived. The provision also required the defense secretary to submit a report to Congress on any violations regarding Defense Department policies on “white supremacist, neo-Nazi, terrorist, gang and other extremist affiliations by service members and recruits.” This idea, too, should be revived. Now the law only requires the Pentagon to study ways to screen military enlistees for “extremist and gang-related activity.”<sup>65</sup>

The decision to strip the requirements in this amendment from the Defense Authorization bill should be reconsidered. Although there may never be a fail-safe system that prevents extremists from infiltrating the military, a thorough review of the existing safeguards is long overdue.

The production and scope of the mandatory yearly report mentioned in a 2019 story in the *New York Times* by a former Army criminal investigator should also be investigated.<sup>66</sup> If it is true that the Pentagon has no law enforcement task force or assigned bodies in each branch to monitor extremists networks and generate data on the problem, that needs to be addressed.

*Need for reconsideration of loopholes for other kinds of extremists in current regulations*

Unfortunately for investigators, expelling members of certain extremist groups—especially those currently in the U.S. military—is not necessarily possible under the current regulations. White supremacy is clearly proscribed but organized anti-government militia activity is not. As Daryl Johnson, an expert on these movements and the former head of the DHS’s right-wing extremism unit has pointed out, when it comes to anti-

<sup>64</sup><https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/19/politics/us-military-white-nationalist-ndaa/index.html>

<sup>65</sup>[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/senate-removes-white-nationalists-from-military-bill-aimed-at-screening-for-extremists\\_n\\_5dfab39be4b0eb2264d3a18d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/senate-removes-white-nationalists-from-military-bill-aimed-at-screening-for-extremists_n_5dfab39be4b0eb2264d3a18d)

<sup>66</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/military-white-nationalists-extremists.html?referringSource=articleShare>

government militias, the military is “more proactive about white supremacy, especially after Charlottesville...but for anti-government groups and militias, there’s no department policy that prohibits being a member of those groups.”<sup>67</sup> These groups often push strands of hatred in particular towards Muslims and immigrants<sup>68</sup> and can be just as dangerous as white supremacists for minority populations, including engaging in targeted attacks against them. They also often advocate for the overthrow of the federal government and members of such organizations have been arrested for involvement in plots designed for just such a purpose. Additionally, militia figures and groups have taken part in white supremacist events, including the Charlottesville riots. We should remember that McVeigh was not just interested in white supremacy, he had also attended militia events. Given that anti-government organizations can have thousands of members and actively recruit from the Armed Forces, an investigation into this loophole is merited.

*Need to work more closely with other federal agencies in tracking extremism*

It is unclear how the military shares information on extremists with other branches and other federal agencies, including the FBI. When the services become aware of an extremist in their ranks, what happens to that information after that soldier is dismissed? How do the services alert each other when they find someone enlisted with extremist views? How do they investigate the networks in the military that the white supremacist may have been involved in or recruited from? How do the branches and investigative services share information white supremacists? A look at how the services interact with and share information with each other on extremists and with the FBI and Department of Justice once the service member leaves the military is warranted.

*Need for the military to fulfill its legal requirement to track and report hate crimes data to the FBI*

The Armed Forces are required by law to provide data on the number of hate crimes committed by service members to the FBI. They have not complied with that mandate and the Pentagon should be required to do so. It may be advisable to examine how hate crimes cases are prioritized and handled in the military as well.

*An examination of the international impact of white supremacy in the U.S. military*

<sup>67</sup><https://psmag.com/social-justice/does-the-american-military-have-a-problem-with-far-right-extremism>

<sup>68</sup>There are dozens and dozens of examples to back up these points. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/24/anti-immigrant-militia-member-arrested--impersonating-us-border-patrol>; <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/u-s-mexico-border-isn-t-protected-militias-it-s-ncna997056>; <https://psmag.com/news/armed-militias-on-the-border-have-a-long-and-often-racist-history>; <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/04/19/stalking-mosques-and-trading-information-back-woods-survivalist-squad-merges-anti-islam>

There is some evidence that the existence of extremists in the ranks is also an international problem and a contributor to terrorism abroad. As the Soufan Center has documented, members of two of America's most violent neo-Nazi groups, the Atomwaffen Division (AWD) and the Rise Above Movement (R.A.M.), have recruited veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict. And their military expertise is shared with white supremacists in other countries. R.A.M. members have traveled to Germany, Ukraine, and Italy to celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday and to forge stronger organizational links with white supremacists abroad.<sup>69</sup> Members of AWD with military experience have trained members in their overseas chapters in weapons and military tactics. In December 2018, three members of the British neo-Nazi Sonnenkrieg Division, which is affiliated with AWD, were arrested for threatening to kill "race traitor" Prince Harry.<sup>70</sup> The leaders had been in direct contact with German compatriots and may have had contacts with organizations in Ukraine.

Additionally, a 2018 report issued by the Canadian Armed forces (CAF), "White Supremacy, Hate Groups, and Racism in The Canadian Armed Forces" found that sixteen members of the CAF had connections to six extremist groups since 2013, four of which were founded and are led from the United States. These groups included AWD, as well as the racist skinhead group Hammerskin Nation, the anti-Muslim Proud Boys and an antigovernment militia movement known as the Three Percenters, some of whose members participated in the 2017 Charlottesville riots.<sup>71</sup>

White supremacists from the U.S. have also traveled to Ukraine, where they received military training from the antisemitic Azov Battalion. Members of the Battalion have in the past received military training and aid from the U.S. government. Now, it seems that those actions have led to enhancing the military skills of our own white supremacists, which could lead to deadly domestic consequences for Americans.<sup>72</sup>

These international connections also warrant close scrutiny by this body and by the Armed Forces.

Today, the white supremacist movement is more energized and emboldened than it has been in decades – and we are seeing increased violence in the form of hate crimes and domestic terrorism as a result both here at home and abroad. This violence is in some cases coming from active duty military and veterans, and white supremacist groups are aggressively courting active-duty troops to join their cause. We must do everything in our power to end any nexus between these extremists and military personnel. It is imperative

<sup>69</sup><https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Report-by-The-Soufan-Center-White-Supremacy-Extremism-The-Transnational-Rise-of-The-Violent-White-Supremacist-Movement.pdf>

<sup>70</sup><https://thinkprogress.org/suspected-neo-nazis-arrested-in-britain-on-terror-charges-90c7e05461ba/>

<sup>71</sup>[https://www.anti-hate.ca/tags/canadian\\_armed\\_forces](https://www.anti-hate.ca/tags/canadian_armed_forces)

<sup>72</sup><https://www.mintpressnews.com/fbi-neo-nazi-militia-trained-by-us-military-in-ukraine-now-training-us-white-supremacists/251687/>

that we speak out strongly against white supremacy in our Armed Forces and act decisively to root out military members who hold these views.

Thank you.

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#### **RECENT PRESENTATIONS**

“Change the Terms: Approaches for Addressing a New Era of Online Hate,” RightsCon Tunis, Tunis, Tunisia, June 12, 2019.

Keynote Panel: “Perspectives on the Far-Right Insurgency: Latin America, Europe, and the U.S.,” U.C. Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies, Berkeley, CA, April 25, 2019.

“Hate in America,” Shepard Symposium, University of Wyoming, Cheyenne, WY, April 12, 2019.

“The Ethics of Public Commemoration,” Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, November 12, 2018.

“Hate Groups and Extremism,” San Mateo Bar Association, San Mateo, CA, October 2018.

“Reducing Hate Online,” Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C., Oct. 25, 2018.

“Life After Hate: Defeating White Supremacy,” Women in the World 2017 Summit, New York, NY, November 2017.

“Hate on the Rise—And What We Can Do To Stop It,” Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen, CO, August 2017.

“White Supremacist Terrorism,” Duke University & Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, Durham, NC, Feb. 22, 2017.

“The Growth of Hate Groups in America,” Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Washington, D.C., May 19, 2016.

“Extremist Groups in America,” Seattle PD Hate Crimes Conference, April 26, 2016.

“Racism, Violence & Democracy,” MIT, Cambridge, MA, Oct. 13, 2016.

“What is Violent Extremism: A Global and US Perspective,” Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH, Oct. 6, 2016.

Panel Remarks, DiscoveryID release of “Hate in America,” Paley Center, New York, NY, Feb. 25, 2016.

Remarks to George Washington University-SPLC event on domestic terrorism hosting Assistant Attorney General John Carlin, Washington, D.C., Oct. 14, 2015.

“Hate and Extremism Today,” Blount Honors College, University of

Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL, April 6, 2015.

Series of presentations on extremism for academic network, American University, Washington, D.C., Feb. 20-21, 2015.

“The Rising Tide of Hate in America,” New College of Florida, Sarasota, FL., Feb. 19, 2015.

Remarks, DiscoveryID release “Hate in America,” Paley Center, New York, NY, Feb. 12, 2015.

Panel Remarks at release of “Welcome to Leith,” Sundance Film Festival, Park City, UT, Jan. 26, 2015.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES:** Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. As a matter of committee policy, the House Committee on Armed Services further requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose whether they are a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, directors, officers, advisors, or resident agents) of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing. Committee policy also requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of any contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or payments originating with any organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness.

Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness’s personal privacy (including home address and phone number), will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness’s appearance before the committee. Witnesses may list additional grants, contracts, or payments on additional sheets, if necessary. Please complete this form electronically.

**Hearing Date:** February 11th, 2020

**Hearing Subject:**

White Supremacists in the Military - How do the Services Identify a Problem and Change the Behavior before this becomes a Pervasive Issue?

**Witness name:** Heidi L. Beirich

**Position/Title:** Co-Founder, Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

Individual       Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:**

Global Project Against Hate and Extremism

**Federal Contract or Grant Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

**2019**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

**2018**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant

**Foreign Government Contract or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

**2019**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

**2018**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment

**Fiduciary Relationships:** If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship

**Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment

**2019**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment

Congressional Testimony

**Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in  
the Military—How to Stop It?**

Mark Pitcavage  
Senior Research Fellow, Center on Extremism  
ADL (Anti-Defamation League)

Hearing before the House Armed Services Committee  
Subcommittee on Military Personnel

Washington D.C.  
February 11, 2020



*Working to stop the defamation of the  
Jewish people and to secure justice and  
fair treatment to all since 1913*

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: thank you on behalf of the Anti-Defamation League for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, ADL has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism by monitoring and exposing extremist groups and movements who spread hate and commit acts of violence. Through our Center on Extremism, widely recognized as a leading authority on combating extremism, terrorism and hate in the United States, ADL plays a prominent role in exposing extremist movements and activities, while helping communities and government agencies alike to combat them. ADL’s team of experts, analysts, and investigators track and disrupt extremist and terrorist activity, and provide law enforcement officials and the public with extensive resources, including analytic reports on extremist trends. We also offer unique resources, such as the Hate on Display Hate Symbols Database<sup>1</sup>, which identifies symbols used by extremists, and the Hate, Extremism, Anti-Semitism and Terrorism (HEAT)<sup>TM</sup> Map, an online tool that provides details on extremist and anti-Semitic incidents nationwide that can be filtered by region and type.<sup>2</sup>

For decades, ADL has been proud to work closely with a variety of military personnel from all the services on numerous issues. ADL has, upon request, provided trainings or briefings related to extremism, terrorism and hate crimes for force protection officers, military police, prosecutors, recruiters, Equal Opportunity personnel, and the military’s criminal investigative organizations, including the Air Force’s Office of Special Investigations (OSI) , the Army’s Criminal Investigation Command (CID) , and the Navy’s Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). We have assisted with investigations and provided intelligence on potential extremists in the Armed Forces. And every year, we conduct Law Enforcement and Society training for the command staff of the US Army CID/Provost Marshal General, which focuses on the lessons of the Holocaust for law enforcement. We have been honored to assist the men and women working so dedicatedly to protect all Americans.

#### **Extremists and the Military: The Nature of the Problem**

Extreme social, political and religious movements pose many problems for the societies in which they are active, particularly when such movements engage in criminal or violent means to achieve their goals. ADL has long understood that adherents of extreme causes, such as the white supremacist movement, pose special problems when allowed to exist within key institutions dedicated to protecting the people of the United States. These institutions include first responders, law enforcement, and the military.

<sup>1</sup> Anti-Defamation League, Hate on Display<sup>TM</sup> Hate Symbols Database, (<https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/hate-symbols>).

<sup>2</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *ADL H.E.A.T. Map: Hate, Extremism, Anti-Semitism, Terrorism* (<https://www.adl.org/heat-map>).

The unchecked presence of extremists in the military has already led to serious negative consequences for the services themselves as well as for the country and could again. These include:

- **Physical harm to service members and/or civilians as a result of hate crimes or other violence by extremist military personnel.** The shooting spree committed by Major Nidal Hasan at Fort Hood, Texas, in November 2009, which killed 13 people and injured more than 30 others, is a sobering example of the severity of this potential threat.<sup>3</sup>
- **Illegal activities such as the theft of military equipment.** Over the years, many extremist movements have viewed the military as a potential source of weaponry and equipment to be appropriated for arming and equipping themselves or for sale. In 2006, to give just one example, ADL provided evidence to the Army that a white supremacist in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was stealing military equipment. That person and another soldier were arrested in 2007, charged with selling stolen government property, including body armor and medical supplies, to an undercover FBI agent. At the time of their arrest, they were actually planning to steal a 105mm artillery piece.<sup>4</sup>
- **Security breaches.** Extremists also pose security risks, as they may convey military information to individuals or groups fighting for their cause. This was the case with Specialist Ryan Anderson of the Washington State National Guard, currently serving a life sentence for trying to provide information to Al Qaeda. Anderson's interests in extremism started with the right-wing militia movement but eventually moved to sympathy with Al Qaeda.<sup>5</sup>
- **Harm to morale, unit cohesion and personnel retention.** The presence of known extremists in a unit can be disruptive to morale and effectiveness. Moreover, service members who are members of racial, ethnic or religious minorities are less likely to stay in the military if they have negative experiences as a result of the behavior of extremists such as white supremacists. There is evidence that service members today are encountering such extremists. In 2017, the *Military Times* conducted a survey of over 1,100 service members that suggested that one in four had seen "examples of white nationalism" among their fellow service members. In 2019, they repeated the survey and found the percentage had risen to more than one in three.<sup>6</sup>
- **Harm to recruiting efforts.** Members of those same minority communities are less likely to consider enlistment if they believe that the services are a haven for extremists.

<sup>3</sup> "Nidal Hasan Email Correspondence with Al-Awlaki Released," Anti-Defamation League, August 1, 2012 (<https://www.adl.org/blog/nidal-hasan-email-correspondence-with-al-awlaki-released>).

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Maurer, "Soldiers charged with equipment thefts," *Fayette Observer*, June 22, 2007; "2 paratroopers charged with selling drugs, stolen equipment," WRAL.com, June 21, 2007, (<https://www.wral.com/news/local/story/1522034/>).

<sup>5</sup> Eli Sanders, "Guardsmen Given Life in Prison for Trying to Help Al Qaeda," *The New York Times*, September 4, 2004, (<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/04/us/guardsman-given-life-in-prison-for-trying-to-help-al-qaeda.html>).

<sup>6</sup> Leo Shane III, "One in four troops sees white nationalism in the ranks," *Military Times*, October 23, 2017, (<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/10/23/military-times-poll-one-in-four-troops-sees-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>); Leo Shane III, "Signs of white supremacy, extremism up again in poll of active-duty troops," *Military Times*, February 6, 2020, (<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/06/signs-of-white-supremacy-extremism-up-again-in-poll-of-active-duty-troops/>)

- **Harm to mission success.** In an era when the U.S. military is engaged in missions around the world, the negative actions of extremist service members may be directly counterproductive to mission success or may become fodder for propagandists of nations unfriendly to the United States. For example, Russian English-language propaganda outlet RT.com (short for *Russia Today*), which has a history of promoting divisiveness within and negative impressions of the United States, has publicized racism and white supremacy in the U.S. military.<sup>7</sup>

The military's unique command structure makes the need for leadership in rejecting extremism and bigotry essential. Instructors, officers, and upper class cadets have virtually absolute command authority over their students and subordinates, creating a unique potential for undue pressure on an individual to conform—or not to complain or report bigotry or race-based intimidation—in order not to jeopardize his or her military career. Conversely, commanders have an outsized ability to address problems within their ranks before they escalate and to discipline or separate those who participate in extremist behavior.

It is in the interests of both the American people as well as the military services themselves that extremists and extremist activity not be tolerated in the ranks.

#### **Right-Wing Extremists and the U.S. Military**

Different types of extremists have posed problems for the U.S. military at different times, but for much of the past century it is the presence of right-wing extremists in the officer corps and particularly in the enlisted ranks that has been the most consistent type of extremist-related problem experienced by the services.

Further, while there are many extreme right-wing causes in the United States, white supremacists have posed the greatest challenges to the U.S. military. There are numerous white supremacist movements alone in the United States, ranging from neo-Nazis to the alt right. Over the past quarter-century, the anti-government extremist militia movement, including its Three Percenter and Oath Keeper wings, has also come to be a significant challenge that should be addressed by the military. Indeed, the Oath Keepers explicitly seek to recruit military personnel to their cause. Finally, the past 20 years have also seen the rise of virulent anti-Muslim extremism, which has made some inroads into the military as well.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Examples include “Many US troops say they encounter racism in the ranks – poll,” RT.com, October 24, 2017, (<https://www.rt.com/usa/407676-quarter-us-soldiers-white-nationalism/>); “National guardsman gave Florida Nazi group combat trainings to prepare for ‘race war.’” RT.com, August 13, 2012, (<https://www.rt.com/usa/guardsman-white-group-supremacist-585/>); and “Nazi extremists infiltrate US military,” RT.com, August 21, 2012, (<https://www.rt.com/usa/military-extremist-supremacist-page-231/>), among others.

<sup>8</sup> On the different movements of the extreme right, see Mark Pitcavage, “Surveying the Landscape of the American Far Right,” George Washington University Program on Extremism, August 2019, ([https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Surveying%20The%20Landscape%20of%20the%20American%20Far%20Right\\_0.pdf](https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Surveying%20The%20Landscape%20of%20the%20American%20Far%20Right_0.pdf)). For the Oath Keepers, see “The Oath Keepers: Anti-Government Extremists Recruiting Military and Police,” Anti-Defamation League, 2015, (<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/The-Oath-Keepers-ADL-Report.pdf>).

ADL has expressed concern about the issue of right-wing extremists in the military for some years. In July 2009, ADL wrote to then-Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates specifically to urge the Secretary “to take appropriate measures to deal with the problem of extremists within the ranks of our armed forces.” Over the previous three years, ADL had reported 72 suspected white supremacists to the various branches, including thirty-eight in the Army, two in the Army National Guard, four in the Navy, nineteen in the Marine Corps, two in the Air Force, and one in the Coast Guard, as well as six with an indeterminate service branch. ADL advocated “a renewed emphasis and increased attention to this issue.”<sup>9</sup>

Today, ten years later, the need to comprehensively address this issue has grown even greater.

The problem exists primarily in two forms: 1) people with extreme ideologies who attempt to join one of the military services; and 2) personnel already serving who join or become sympathetic to an extremist movement. While the number of service members who have extreme ideologies is certainly a small fraction of the overall number of personnel, such individuals can cause harm far disproportionate to their number. Moreover, both the number of extremist personnel and the problems they cause tend to increase during upswells of right-wing extremism in the broader society.

Historians have traced problems related to right-wing extremism in the military back to well before World War II, when officers such as Major General George Van Horn Moseley, a Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, actively promoted anti-Semitic and white supremacist views within the U.S. Army officer corps. In the years before World War II, Moseley wanted refugees fleeing Nazi persecution in Europe—most of whom were Jews—to be sterilized before being admitted by the United States, claiming “only that way can we properly protect our future.”<sup>10</sup>

The services at the time were segregated, as they had been since the Civil War, and some officers opposed the move to desegregate the Armed Forces that began after World War II. One Air Force officer predicted that some officers, like himself, would be court-martialed for their opposition to desegregation. In fact, the integration of the military branches from 1946-1954 proved to be a success story, though it took longer for the National Guard to be integrated and for other key anti-discrimination measures to be implemented.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Glen S. Lewy and Abraham H. Foxman to The Honorable Robert M. Gates, July 29, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *The “Jewish Threat”: Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army*, New York (Basic Books, 2000), 250.

<sup>11</sup> Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949*, Tuscaloosa (University of Alabama Press, 1999), 287. On desegregation of the military in general, see Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965*, Washington, D.C. (Center of Military History, 1981). ADL supported the integration of the military and related measures, such as providing integrated education for the children of military personnel; see Morton Puner, “The Armed Forces: An Integration Success Story,” *Anti-Defamation League Bulletin*, November 1962.

Despite this success, there were officers in the military who continued to promote extremist views, including to the troops. In the late 1950s, Major General Edwin Walker distributed right-wing literature to soldiers under his command and accused prominent public figures of loyalty to communism. The subsequent scandal resulted in a court martial and his resignation from the Army. Walker then became a leader in the far right, promoting white supremacy and conspiracy theories—as did a number of other high-ranking officers after their retirement, including Rear Admiral John Crommelin, Jr., Lieutenant General Edward Almond of the Army, and Lieutenant General Pedro del Valle of the Marine Corps, among others.<sup>12</sup>

It was following the Civil Rights Era, however, that the patterns emerged that to this day shape the issue of white supremacists and other right-wing extremists in the military. Since the 1980s, American society has experienced periodic upsurges in right-wing extremism. These surges occurred in the early-to-mid 1980s, in the mid-to-late 1990s, and during the period of 2008-2011. The United States is currently experiencing the fourth such resurgence of right-wing extremism, which began in 2015.

During each of these upswings in extremism, the military services experienced increased extremist activity within their ranks, in part because these surges typically cause an increase in the number of newly radicalized young white males, some of whom may join the military. The increased extremist presence eventually leads to major criminal incidents, sometimes including extreme violence. Following such scandals, the services have sometimes made partial reforms to address extremist-related issues, without adopting comprehensive approaches.

During the early-to-mid 1980s surge of right-wing extremism, white supremacists took an active part in the military. From 1980 to 1982, for example, some active-duty soldiers from Fort Hood joined the Texas Emergency Reserve, a large paramilitary group established by two Ku Klux Klan groups in order to harass and intimidate immigrant Vietnamese fishermen in Southeast Texas. In 1987, two soldiers stationed at Fort Bragg donned masks to tie two fellow soldiers to a tree and steal their rifles as part of a large military-equipment-theft ring operated by white supremacists. When federal agents solved the case in 1990, they found a large cache of military weapons and explosives, including what one ATF official described as “enough military explosives to destroy a city block.”

Nor is this merely ancient history; the ringleader of this cell, Sergeant Michael Tubbs, decades later became one of the ringleaders of the violent white supremacist protests in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Indeed, Tubbs is currently a defendant in a federal lawsuit in Virginia arising out of those protests, *Sines v. Kessler*, that ADL is helping to support and in which our Center on Extremism has provided expert input. The Sines plaintiffs, who suffered various injuries, have sued Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups, and other associated white supremacists, including Tubbs, currently a leader of the white supremacist group League of the South, for conspiring to engage in violence against racial minorities and their supporters. While ultimate resolution

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<sup>12</sup> On Walker, Crommelin, and del Valle, see Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*, Athens (University of Georgia Press, 2010, 103-150).

awaits another day, the court has held that the plaintiffs have plausibly alleged that the defendants formed a conspiracy to commit the racial violence that led to the plaintiffs' varied injuries.<sup>13</sup>

Following scandals in the 1980s involving military-related white supremacist incidents, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger issued a directive prohibiting military members from actively participating in white supremacist groups. Prior to that, there was no such prohibition; in the late 1970s, a Navy spokesperson even said Klan membership was "no more illegal than membership in the Elks."<sup>14</sup>

The 1980s surge also provides a cautionary tale of the potential consequences of failure to deal with the issue of extremism in the ranks. During the 1980s, so many right-wing extremists joined state defense forces—small state-run military forces allowed by federal law—that some units became controlled by extremists. In 1984, Texas had to disband a unit of its State Guard because of the activities of extremists. In 1987, Utah dismantled its state defense force after discovering that some members were providing training for Aryan Nations and engaging in other similar activities. In Ohio, some state defense force members broke away from the force to form their own private militia—which still exists today.<sup>15</sup>

In the mid-to-late 1990s, the U.S. experienced another surge of right-wing extremism, propelled not only by an upswing in white supremacy but also the rise of anti-government extremism in the form of the new militia movement. For the first time, the Internet helped play a role in the spread of extremist ideology. Both white supremacists and anti-government extremists enlarged their presence in the military services. Once more, problems such as theft increased; in 1997, for example, three New Hampshire militia members, one an Army reservist, were convicted of stealing \$100,000 in military equipment from Fort Devens. But the most serious incident occurred in 1995, when two active-duty soldiers stationed at Fort Bragg—both white

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Defamation League, "Ku Klux Klan Paramilitary Activities: Report to National Executive Committee Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Oct. 12-26, 1980, Dallas, Texas," New York (Anti-Defamation League, 1980); "2 Soldiers and 2 Civilians Arrested in Theft of Huge Weapons Cache," Associated Press story as published in *The New York Times*, November 19, 1980 (<https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/19/us/2-soldiers-and-2-civilians-arrested-in-theft-of-huge-weapons-cache.html>); Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard University Press, 2018), 135-137; Trymaine Lee, "The Other Michael Tubbs: Two Men, Two Radically Different Paths," NBCNews.com, August 29, 2017 (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/other-michael-tubbs-two-men-two-radically-different-paths-n794901>); "League of the South (LOS) [Backgrounder]," Anti-Defamation League, (<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/league-of-the-south-los>); Brad Kutner, "Civil Lawsuit Against Charlottesville Rally Organizers Can Move Forward," Courthouse News Service, July 10, 2018, (<https://www.courthousenews.com/civil-lawsuit-against-charlottesville-rally-organizers-can-move-forward/>).

<sup>14</sup> Dave Philipps, "White Supremacism in the U.S. Military, Explained," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2019 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/27/us/military-white-nationalists-extremists.html>).

<sup>15</sup> Ed Connolly, "Scandals of the State Militias," *The Nation* 252 (March 18, 1991): 338; Untitled UPI story, October 23, 1984; Untitled Associated Press story, October 23, 1984; "Preparedness training in Virginia," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1987; Christopher Smith, "D.C. politics fueling a new wave of militias," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 5, 1994; Ulysses Torassa, Untitled story, States News Service, June 22, 1987; Myron Struck, Untitled story, State News Service, September 29, 1987; Kevin Maurer, "Soldiers charged with equipment thefts," *Fayette Observer*, June 22, 2007.

supremacists—shot and killed an African-American couple in a horrific hate crime murder. This incident resulted in a major investigation of white supremacy at Fort Bragg and in the discharge of 20 members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. That there was a problem at Fort Bragg should have been no surprise; at the time, one special forces sergeant even anonymously (under the pseudonym “Special Forces Underground”) published a magazine, *The Resister*, popular with the militia movement and white supremacists—and read by Timothy McVeigh. The Fort Bragg murders resulted in a tightening of regulations regarding extremism in the military to prohibit not just active participation but also membership in extremist groups.<sup>16</sup>

A third surge in right-wing extremism occurred roughly from 2008-2011. During that period, there was a major resurgence of the militia movement, including the rise of many calling themselves “Three Percenters” as well as others joining a new militia-related group called The Oath Keepers that was created to target active and former police officers, first responders and members of the military for recruitment. The evolution of the Internet, especially the rapid growth of social media during these years, once more played a significant role in spreading extremist ideology. During this period, much of the attention related to extremism in the military, by the military and the media alike, understandably focused on the 2009 Fort Hood shootings. Yet right-wing extremists, too, engaged in murder and terrorism in this time frame.

The most concerning incident involved a large anti-government militia group called FEAR (an acronym for Forever Enduring, Always Ready), formed by soldiers stationed at Fort Stewart in Georgia, whose members plotted a variety of different terrorist acts. The group’s leader, Private Isaac Aguigui, and other members murdered a fellow FEAR member and his girlfriend in 2011 out of fear of informants. During the police investigation of these murders, law enforcement officers also discovered that Aguigui had murdered his own pregnant wife in order to secure \$400,000 in insurance money that he used in part to help fund the activities of FEAR. At least 10 civilian and military members of FEAR were convicted on various charges stemming from the investigations. As happened during previous surges, Department of Defense regulations were revised and somewhat tightened in 2009.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “Boastful leader of militia faces jail,” *Boston Globe*, March 4, 1997; “Second Ex-Paratrooper Gets Life In North Carolina Racial Killings,” *The New York Times*, May 13, 1997 (<https://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/13/us/second-ex-paratrooper-gets-life-in-north-carolina-racial-killings.html>); Gregory Walker, “Steven Barry becomes important figure in paramilitary underground,” *Intelligence Report*, Summer 1999, (<https://www.spicenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/1999/steven-barry-becomes-important-figure-paramilitary-underground>); Department of Defense Directive, Number 1325.6, “Guidelines for Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces,” October 1, 1996 (<https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a320448.pdf>). One white supremacist service member stationed at Fort Bragg at the time who was not detected by authorities was Wade Michael Page, who would in 2012 kill six people in a shooting spree at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin; see Megan McCloskey, “Sikh temple shooter promoted extremist views during his Army years,” *Stars and Stripes*, August 7, 2012, (<http://www.stripes.com/sikh-temple-shooter-promoted-extremist-views-during-his-army-years-1.185085>).

<sup>17</sup> Marilyn Mayo and Mark Pitcavage, “Rage Grows in America: Anti-Government Conspiracies,” Anti-Defamation League, November 2009 (<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combatting-hate/Rage-Grows-In-America.pdf>); Nadya Labi, “Rogue Element: How an anti-government militia grew on a U.S. Army base,” *The New Yorker*, May 26, 2014, (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/26/rogue-element>); “Army private convicted of murdering pregnant wife,” CBSNews.com, March 27, 2014, (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/army-private-convicted-of-murdering-pregnant-wife/>); Department of Defense Instruction Number 1325.06, November

### Extremism in the Military in 2020

Today, the United States is experiencing yet another surge of right-wing extremism, one that began in 2015-2016. The previous surges primarily affected anti-government extremists, but the current one is largely driven by the alt right, the newest segment of the white supremacist movement. Its rise over the past decade has brought a significant influx of thousands of young white males into the white supremacist movement.<sup>18</sup>

ADL's data finds that of the 427 people killed by extremists in America between 2009 and 2018, 73% were killed by right-wing extremists—76% of them by white supremacists—making white supremacists the deadliest type of extremist movement in the United States in those ten years, by far.

Like previous upswells of the white supremacist movement, the current surge has affected the U.S. military. Based on monitoring extremist groups and movements, as well as information from public sources, ADL believes the number of extremists in the military has increased due to a higher percentage of white supremacists attempting to join the military and the development of white supremacist leanings among some currently-serving personnel. The overall percentage of extremists in the military remains quite low compared to the approximately 2.2 million men and women serving in the military on active duty or in the reserve components—but extremists cause problems far disproportionate to their numbers.

To an even greater degree than in previous surges of extremism, the Internet has played a role in the present one, with extremist content found on websites, discussion forums, chat rooms, social media, messaging apps, gaming and streaming sites, and other platforms. The rise of the alt right began as largely an Internet-driven phenomenon and only later expanded to the physical world. On-line radicalization—including radicalization of military members—is more common now than ever before, though most radicalization occurs as a combination of online and offline elements. It is no coincidence that many service members exposed in recent years by journalists and anti-racist activists were discovered because of their extensive online activities. The white supremacist online ecosystem, always evolving, poses problems for military authorities seeking to curb the spread of extremism in the ranks, as they may miss evidence of extremism that appears only online.

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27, 2009, "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces," (<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/132506p.pdf>); "Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood; Department of Defense Independent Review Related to Fort Hood," January 2010, (<https://fas.org/sgp/eprint/fthood.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup> Mark Pitcavage, "New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of White Supremacy," Anti-Defamation League, 2018, (<https://www.adl.org/new-hate-and-old>); "Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy," Anti-Defamation League, 2016, (<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/alt-right-a-primer-on-the-new-white-supremacy>); "From Alt Right to Alt Lite: Naming the Hate," Anti-Defamation League, 2017, (<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/from-alt-right-to-alt-lite-naming-the-hate>).

The current surge of extremism, like previous ones, has had consequences for the military services. In the past few years, numerous serious criminal incidents have been linked to white supremacists currently serving as active-duty or reserve military personnel. Less than two weeks ago, Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Hasson was sentenced in federal court to 13 years in prison on weapons and other charges in connection with alleged plans to commit domestic terrorism.<sup>19</sup>

The FBI investigation into Hasson revealed chilling details, including the influence on Hasson by the manifesto of Norwegian terrorist and mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik. Internet searches that Hasson performed—often on his Coast Guard work computer—revealed his mindset and intention. Among these were terms such as “homemade C4,” “biological weapon,” “bomb [Timothy] McVeigh used,” and “best n-----killing gun.” Searches related to potential targets included “destruction of Washington DC,” “how to bring down the us government,” “where do congressmen and senators live when they are in DC,” “how to rid the us of jews,” “George Soros lives where,” “most liberal fed judges,” and “biggest donors to d[emocrats].”<sup>20</sup>

In a document that investigators found on Hasson’s Coast Guard computer, Hasson claimed that “liberalist/globalist ideology” was destroying white people and there was “no way to counteract without violence.” According to Hasson, “much blood will have to be spilled to get whitey off the couch.” For that reason, he wrote, “I will strike. I can’t strike just to wound. I must find a way to deliver a blow that cannot be shaken off.”<sup>21</sup>

Prosecutors accurately summarized Hasson as a man “inspired by racist murderers” who “stockpiled assault weapons, studied violence, and intended to exact retribution on minorities and those he considered traitors.” Had law enforcement not caught him while he was still making his plans, they noted, “we now would be counting the bodies of the defendant’s victims instead of years of the defendant’s prison time.”<sup>22</sup>

The Hasson incident is a shocking example of an extremist plotting a major terrorist act while serving as an active-duty officer in the U.S. Coast Guard. Yet it is by no means an isolated incident. Rather, it is one of numerous disturbing acts of violence, planned violence, or other criminal activity by white supremacists and other extremists that have emerged from the military in just the past few years.

<sup>19</sup> Pete Williams, “White supremacist Coast Guard officer sentenced to 13 years in prison,” NBCNews.com, January 21, 2020 (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/white-supremacist-coast-guard-officer-sentenced-13-years-prison-n1127636>).

<sup>20</sup> Exhibit 19, United States v. Christopher Paul Hasson, Case 8:19-cr-0096-GJH, Document 115-20, filed January 29, 2020, 5-8, 33, 55; Exhibit 23, Ibid. For these and many other references, see “Sentencing Memorandum by USA as to Christopher Paul Hasson (and attachments), entered January 29, 2020, United States v. Hasson (8:19-cr-00096), (<https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/14581072/united-states-v-hasson/>).

<sup>21</sup> Exhibit 19, Ibid, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Government’s Memorandum in Aid of Sentencing, entered January 17, 2020, 1.

Some of the other criminal incidents that have been uncovered include:

- **Topeka, Kansas, September 2019:** Jarret William Smith, a soldier stationed at Fort Riley and an alleged white supremacist, was charged with distributing information related to explosives and mass destruction. Smith allegedly offered to teach people to make explosive devices and talked about killing Antifa activists or attacking a local news station.<sup>23</sup>
- **Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, June 2018:** Marine Lance Corporal Vasillios Pistoris was demoted and ejected from the Marines after a court martial related to his connections to white supremacist groups such as Atomwaffen Division and the Traditionalist Worker Party. Pistoris was photographed assaulting a man during the August 2017 “Unite the Right” white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.<sup>24</sup>
- **Fort Myers, Florida, April 2018:** A soldier who was absent without leave, Alex Zwiefelhofer, and Craig Lang, a former Army specialist, were indicted for the double murder of a Florida couple who had met with them to sell them guns. Zwiefelhofer and Lang were extremists who in 2016 traveled to Ukraine to fight in an extreme right-wing Ukrainian militia against Russian separatists. The Army discharged Zwiefelhofer between the time he went AWOL and the time of the murders.<sup>25</sup>
- **Tampa, Florida, June 2017:** Florida National Guardsman—and a founding member of the neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division—Brandon Russell was arrested after officers found explosives in his apartment while investigating the death of two of his roommates at the hands of a fourth roommate. Prosecutors claimed that Russell planned to use the explosives to attack civilians, nuclear facilities, and synagogues. Russell pleaded guilty in January 2018 to possessing an unregistered destructive device and unlawful storage of explosive materials.<sup>26</sup>
- **Fayetteville, North Carolina, February 2017:** Russell Thomas Langford, a major in the Army Reserve, was sentenced to eight months of home confinement after pleading guilty in federal court to using a firearm to threaten members of a local mosque.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> “Soldier at Fort Riley Charged with Distributing Instructions for Bombs,” United States Attorney’s Office District of Kansas Press Release, September 23, 2019, (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ks/pr/soldier-fort-riley-charged-distributing-instructions-bombs>).

<sup>24</sup> Shawn Snow, “27 reports of extremist activity by US service members over the past 5 years, DoD says,” *Marine Corps Times*, September 13, 2019, (<https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2019/09/13/27-reports-of-extremist-activity-by-us-service-members-over-the-past-5-years-dod-says/>).

<sup>25</sup> Mike Eckel and Christopher Miller, “Former U.S. Soldier Who Fought With Ukrainian Far-Right Militia Wanted for U.S. Murder,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 26, 2019, (<https://www.rferl.org/a/former-u-s-soldier-who-fought-with-ukrainian-far-right-militia-wanted-for-u-s-murder/30185448.html>); Jordan Green, “Combat Vet. Ukrainian Freedom Fighter. Alleged Murderer: Craig Lang Was Always Looking for a War,” *Indy Week*, November 26, 2019, (<https://indyweek.com/news/longform/craig-lang-ukraine-murder-white-supremacist/>).

<sup>26</sup> Joanna Mendelson, “Atomwaffen Division (AWD),” Anti-Defamation League, n.d., (<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/atomwaffen-division-awd>).

<sup>27</sup> Tasneem Nashrulla, “Army Reserve Officer Arrested for Targeting a Mosque Threatened to Kill Retired Muslim Army Captain,” *BuzzFeed News*, June 10, 2016, ([https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tasneemnashrulla/armed-suspect-arrested-for-threatening-a-muslim-man-who-serv#\\_by6K4Vm6l](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tasneemnashrulla/armed-suspect-arrested-for-threatening-a-muslim-man-who-serv#_by6K4Vm6l)); “North Carolina Man Sentenced for Threats Against Mosque Members in Raeford, North Carolina,” Department of Justice press release, February 2,

Beyond these criminal incidents there have been many more recent incidents involving white supremacists on active duty, or in the National Guard or Reserves, who attended white supremacist events, spread white supremacist propaganda, participated in white supremacist groups, posted in white supremacist discussion forums, or engaged in other similar activities.

Just a few selected examples from 2019 alone:

- **Atlanta, Georgia, December 2019:** Two National Guardsmen were discharged after their membership in a white supremacist group and their appearance carrying signs with white supremacist slogans at a white supremacist event became public.<sup>28</sup>
- **Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, November 2019:** Marine Corps officials began an investigation into a lance corporal after he was identified as having been active on a white supremacist message board.<sup>29</sup>
- **Colorado Springs, Colorado, September 2019:** An Air Force master sergeant was demoted and now faces possible discharge proceedings after he was identified as a chapter leader of the white supremacist group Identity Evropa.<sup>30</sup>
- **Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, June 2019:** A Marine lance corporal was discharged after admitting to having promoted white supremacist ideology online.<sup>31</sup>
- **Tacoma, Washington, April 2019:** An enlisted soldier left the Army after anti-racist activists exposed his active membership in the white supremacist group Identity Evropa. An Army spokesperson would not confirm if he had been discharged.<sup>32</sup>
- **San Diego, California, May 2019:** A Marine lance corporal was discharged from the Marine Reserves after being identified taking part in Identity Evropa events and attending the white supremacist “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017.<sup>33</sup>

2017, (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/north-carolina-man-sentenced-threats-against-mosque-members-raeford-north-carolina>).

<sup>28</sup> Chris Joyner, “National Guard drops two Georgians after investigating extremist ties,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 26, 2019, (<https://www.ajc.com/news/national-guard-drops-two-georgians-after-investigating-extremist-ties/>).

<sup>29</sup> James Laporta and Asher Stockler, “Active duty marine who posted racist slurs on neo-Nazi website is identified: ‘Anybody else with our views?’” *Newsweek*, November 18, 2019, (<https://www.newsweek.com/active-duty-marine-neo-nazi-website-white-supremacist-identified-1470487>).

<sup>30</sup> Elise Schmelzer, “Air Force moves to discharge Colorado sergeant tied to white supremacist group,” *Denver Post*, December 17, 2019, <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/12/17/air-force-identity-evropa-cory-reeves/>.

<sup>31</sup> Gina Harkins, “Marine Lance Corporal Will Be Kicked Out Over Racist Social Media Posts,” *Military.com*, June 11, 2019, (<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/06/11/marine-lance-corporal-will-be-kicked-out-over-racist-social-media-posts.html>).

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Mathias, “After HuffPost Investigation, 4 White Nationalists Out of U.S. Military—But Others Allowed to Remain,” *Huffington Post*, August 7, 2019, ([https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-kicked-out-huffpost-investigation\\_n\\_5d4b0f83e4b0066eb70b9945](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-kicked-out-huffpost-investigation_n_5d4b0f83e4b0066eb70b9945)).

<sup>33</sup> Shawn Snow, “27 reports of extremist activity;” “Two Years Ago, They Marched in Charlottesville. Where Are They Now?” *Anti-Defamation League*, August 8, 2019, (<https://www.adl.org/blog/two-years-ago-they-marched-in-charlottesville-where-are-they-now>).

- **Stamford, Connecticut, March 2019:** The Marines administratively discharged a Marine Reserve lance corporal for hosting Identity Evropa events and distributing white supremacist propaganda on college campuses in Connecticut and New York.<sup>34</sup>
- **Jackson, Tennessee, March 2019:** A lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve was exposed as a participant on an online chat site linked to Identity Evropa. In posts made to the site, the colonel allegedly discussed distributing white supremacist propaganda in Tennessee and Mississippi. As of December 2019, the colonel was still in the Army Reserve.<sup>35</sup>
- **Brighton, New York, March 2019:** Local police cited a University of Rochester ROTC cadet and member of the Army Reserve for violating town code after his fingerprints were allegedly found during an investigation into a rash of white supremacist fliers and stickers. He has allegedly been allowed to stay in the military.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately, these are far from the only incidents involving extremists and the military over the past few years. That almost all of the extremists in these examples were initially exposed by journalists or anti-racist activists is another troubling sign that the military branches may not be engaged in sufficient self-scrutiny.

#### Coming to Grips with Extremism in the Military

With over two million men and women in the active duty and reserve components, the U.S. military is a large segment of the American population, representative enough that it will always have some extremists within its ranks or seeking to join them. Moreover, the history of the past several decades has amply demonstrated that surges of white supremacy and other forms of extremism in the general population are mirrored by an increase in the number of extremists in the military, as well as the problems caused by those extremists.

It's not really a question of if there are extremists in the military. They exist—not in huge numbers, but in numbers large enough to cause significant problems, including a potential for violence and terrorism. The question really is, how can the military services and the Department of Defense better deal with this problem?

The Department and the military branches must seek to prevent extremists from entering their ranks in the first place, while having measures in place to detect and discharge already-serving members who become involved in extremist causes. To do this, the Department and the services need not only comprehensive and effective regulations, but also must provide systematic training

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Mathias, "After HuffPost Investigation."

<sup>35</sup> Katie Shephard, "'Vile and disturbing': Army unit marks Battle of the Bulge with picture of Nazi war criminal who massacred Americans," *Washington Post*, December 17, 2019, (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/12/17/joachim-peiper-nazi-war-criminal-photo-shared-us-army-units-battle-bulge/>).

<sup>36</sup> Trevor Whitestone, "UR senior linked to spate of white nationalist fliers in Brighton," *Campus Times*, March 5, 2019, (<http://www.campustimes.org/2019/03/05/ur-senior-linked-to-spate-of-white-nationalist-fliers-in-brighton/>); Christopher Mathias, "After HuffPost Investigation."

to all relevant personnel, both on the regulations and on their responsibilities in this area and the tools at their disposal.

ADL's experiences working with the military branches over the years on the issue of extremism have led us to be concerned that some personnel have lacked clear training and guidance and that policies and regulations have not always been widely and uniformly implemented. This has sometimes left decision-makers to their own devices without clear understanding of what they should do in particular situations involving service members with extremist ties. The result has been that some personnel are well-versed and responsive to extremist-related issues, while others are not. Some may be aware of tools, such as administrative discharges, that may be available to them, while others may not.

It is important that all military recruiters and initial entry trainers receive uniform training on how to detect signs of extremist activism among recruits and newly-inducted personnel, and how to respond accordingly. It is important that all company-grade officers and senior non-commissioned officers, all advanced trainers, equal opportunity officers, civilian investigators and other relevant personnel have training on detecting signs of extremist involvement by service members under their purview and on how to implement relevant regulations. Moreover, to allow these people to perform effectively, the regulations on extremist-related issues ranging from prohibited activities to prohibited tattoos must be clear, uniform from service to service, and comprehensive.

First Amendment freedoms, including free speech protections, are a core American value that ADL strongly supports. Like many other rights more liberally exercised in the civilian sphere, however, free speech may be curtailed in the military context due to the military's necessity for good order and discipline. Superiors who detect signs of extremist activism or involvement should take action where appropriate, but accused military personnel should be given due process.

ADL understands how important it is that the Armed Services prevent adherents of extremist causes from entering the ranks and appropriately address those who are found in service. As such, ADL offers our expertise and experience to help the Department of Defense and the separate branches tackle this serious issue, including assistance in developing training curricula, as well as train-the-trainer events.

The U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard have protected this nation well in the past—and will continue to do so into the future, along with the Space Force. It is important that extremists in the military are not allowed to undermine this mission or harm their brothers and sisters in arms or the American people.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1) Commanders and DoD Leaders Must Lead**

In September 2017, Lieutenant General Jay Silveria, Superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy, set an excellent standard for a forceful response to bigotry in his strong, eloquent repudiation of hate at a school-wide assembly when racial slurs appeared in the Academy's preparatory school dormitory and photos were shared on social media. General Silveria told the assembly of nearly 5,500 students, faculty, and command staff: "If you can't treat someone with dignity and respect, Get out!" The right to free speech is a core value, but the promotion of hate should be vehemently and consistently rejected. Military leaders are uniquely capable of influencing those who serve below them by speaking out clearly against hate and extremism and by ensuring that these issues are taken seriously throughout the ranks.<sup>37</sup>

### **2) Provide Training and Resources to Prevent Extremists From Entering the Military**

The military services must have comprehensive policies and procedures in place to prevent extremists from joining the military. Recruiters and others charged with promoting accessions in the Armed Forces must be trained on these procedures and on symbols associated with hate groups and extremists that could prompt appropriate concerns about recruiting a particular individual.

### **3) DoD and Service Policy and Reporting Regarding White Supremacist and Extremist Activity Must Be Clear, Transparent and Consistent**

The regulations on extremist-related issues ranging from prohibited activities to prohibited tattoos must be clear, uniform from service to service, and comprehensive. Commanders, NCOs and investigators must have clear and consistent guidance regarding their options—including discharges or separations when appropriate—for handling documented extremist activities as well as early stage interventions to stop the radicalization process. In instances when white supremacist activity is documented, separation or prosecution under the UCMJ should be prioritized.

Further, it is critical that the military's efforts be transparent to engender faith among service members, their families and all Americans. The Department and services should consistently track and label extremist activity and any resulting separations and, where appropriate, provide referrals to civilian law enforcement agencies to ensure that this information is not lost in the separation process.

<sup>37</sup> After an investigation, officials found that the scrawled slur in a dormitory was a hoax committed by one of its targets, a black cadet candidate, who was actually responsible for the act. General Silveria, again, responded appropriately: "Regardless of the circumstances under which those words were written, they were written, and that deserved to be addressed...You can never overemphasize the need for a culture of dignity and respect — and those who don't understand those concepts, aren't welcome here." Tom Roeder, "Air Force Academy finds cadet candidate responsible for racist messages," Colorado Springs Gazette, November 7, 2017, ([https://gazette.com/air-force-academy-finds-cadet-candidate-responsible-for-racist-messages/article\\_e0abd653-e47b-5b6f-837b-d793a8369e34.html](https://gazette.com/air-force-academy-finds-cadet-candidate-responsible-for-racist-messages/article_e0abd653-e47b-5b6f-837b-d793a8369e34.html)).

4) **Provide Training and Resources to Detect, Discipline and Discharge Service Members Involved in Promoting Hate Violence or Extremist Activities**

The Department and the military services should provide regular, comprehensive training on existing regulations that set out the terms for how to handle involvement in extremist activities. Policies are only as effective as their implementation and good implementation requires proper training. All company-grade officers and senior non-commissioned officers, all initial entry and advanced trainers, equal opportunity officers, civilian investigators, and other relevant personnel should be trained on detecting signs of extremist involvement among service members and on how to understand and implement relevant regulations. DoD and the services should incorporate the best tools and expertise in identifying and addressing radicalization and extremism, including partnering with civil society organizations that can provide expertise on the radicalization process and appropriate interventions.

5) **Carefully Vet Individuals Selected to Provide Hate and Extremism Training for Bias**

Some outside experts hired to teach programs designed to address diversity and equal opportunity have, instead, promoted stereotypical or inaccurate information about Muslims, Islam, and other groups and their connection with terrorism. These views are not only inaccurate but undermine the mission, and should be treated as such. Similar reviews have taken place in the past,<sup>38</sup> and yet the risk of bigoted training endures. We urge a prompt review of all training materials to ensure service members are trained accurately about the threats we face while preserving core American values in how those threats are conveyed.

6) **Assess the Impact on the Force of White Supremacy.**

A recent survey suggests that many service members are exposed to white supremacy. We recommend the Department and services study the impact on good order, discipline, morale and readiness of this exposure. Further, given the overt misogyny present within the alt right segment of the white supremacist movement and the recent rise of another extremist movement, the so-called “incels” or involuntary celibates, who have a belief system centered around misogyny, we encourage DoD to study whether extremist-related misogyny specifically has had any impact on the Armed Forces and what measures could be adopted to prevent it from having any in the future.

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<sup>38</sup> Spencer Ackerman, “FBI Calls In The Army To Fix Its Counterterrorism Training,” Wired, November 3, 2011, (<https://www.wired.com/2011/11/fbi-west-point-training/>)

#### Biographical Information for Mark Pitcavage

Dr. Mark Pitcavage, a historian and authority on extremism in the United States, is a Senior Research Fellow at the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism. The Anti-Defamation League is one of the country's oldest and most respected civil rights organizations. In the past, Dr. Pitcavage has served ADL as Director of the Center on Extremism, Director of Investigative Research, and Director of Fact Finding. In these various positions, Dr. Pitcavage has helped guide ADL's efforts to combat extremism and domestic terrorism.

Dr. Pitcavage has written dozens of reports and articles on extremism and domestic terrorism, including the ADL reports *New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of American White Supremacy*, as well as *A Guidebook on Extremism for Law Enforcement* and *A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right-Wing Terrorism in the United States*. He has authored academic articles on subjects ranging from the militia movement to lone wolf terrorism.

Dr. Pitcavage has been actively involved with training law enforcement on terrorism and extremism issues for over 24 years, working closely with the FBI and many state and local agencies. He has trained nearly 18,000 law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges; assisted in a variety of criminal investigations; and served numerous times as an expert witness in federal and state courts.

Dr. Pitcavage's work has been cited by many scholars and researchers and he has appeared on many documentaries and news programs, from NBC News to Nightline to the BBC. He has been quoted by most major newspapers and news websites in the United States and many abroad.

Prior to joining the Anti-Defamation League, Dr. Pitcavage was Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Intergovernmental Research, where he served as Research Director for the SLATT Program. This program, the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training Program, was a Justice Department anti-terrorism program created after the Oklahoma City bombing and conducted jointly with the FBI to train senior state and local law enforcement officers on domestic terrorism issues.

Dr. Pitcavage received his MA and Ph.D. in military history from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, where he still lives and works.

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES:** Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. As a matter of committee policy, the House Committee on Armed Services further requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose whether they are a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, directors, officers, advisors, or resident agents) of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing. Committee policy also requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of any contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or payments originating with any organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness.

Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number), will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee. Witnesses may list additional grants, contracts, or payments on additional sheets, if necessary. Please complete this form electronically.

**Hearing Date:** February 11th, 2020

**Hearing Subject:**

White Supremacists in the Military - How do the Services Identify a Problem and Change the Behavior before this becomes a Pervasive Issue?

**Witness name:** Mark Pitcavage

**Position/Title:** Senior Research Fellow, Center on Extremism

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

- Individual       Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:**

Anti-Defamation League

**Federal Contract or Grant Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**2019**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**2018**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**Foreign Government Contract or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

**2019**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

**2018**

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

**Fiduciary Relationships:** If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
N/A	

**Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

**2019**

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			



**Testimony of Lecia Brooks  
Southern Poverty Law Center**

**Before the  
Subcommittee on Military Personnel  
U.S. House Armed Services Committee**

**Alarming Incidents of White Supremacy in the Military—How to Stop It?**

**Feb. 11, 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the U.S. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on white supremacy in the military and how to stop it.

My name is Lecia Brooks. I am a member of the senior leadership team at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). We are a civil rights organization founded in 1971 and based in Montgomery, Alabama, with offices in five Southern states and Washington, D.C. For more than three decades, the SPLC has been monitoring, issuing reports about, and training law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States. Each year since 1990, we have conducted a census of hate groups operating across America, a list that is used extensively by journalists, law enforcement agencies and scholars, among others.

I want to start by saying that, right now, the white supremacist movement in the United States is surging and presents a distinct and present danger to this country and its institutions, including the U.S. Armed Forces. Recent investigations have revealed dozens of veterans and active-duty servicemembers who are affiliated with white supremacist activity.

This is far from a new problem. In fact, the Southern Poverty Law Center has been documenting white supremacist infiltration of the military and urging officials to take substantial and systematic action since 1986. It is now clear that, despite some adjustments in policies related to recruitment and conduct within the U.S. Armed Forces, white supremacist activity continues to persist in the military. Because servicemembers often possess unique training and capabilities, those who are indoctrinated into white supremacist ideology may represent a significant threat to national security and the safety of our communities.

It is also clear that this issue has not been taken as seriously as the situation warrants at the highest levels of our government. In December, for example, it was reported that the National Defense Authorization Act was altered in the U.S. Senate to remove mention of “white nationalists” in the screening process for military enlistees. Under this change, the Department of Defense is instructed only to screen for “extremist and gang-related activity.”<sup>1</sup> The omission is significant when we consider the current political and social landscape—where officials with clear sympathies for white nationalist ideology are allowed to serve in the White House, hate groups have reached historic numbers, and mass killings are taking place at the hands of white supremacists.

As we have been doing for more than 30 years, we urge the Congress and the Department of Defense to develop and enforce clear policies that will establish a true zero tolerance standard for white supremacist activity within all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. For its part, Congress must exercise a strong and continuing oversight role to ensure that our military is not infiltrated by white supremacists who want to obtain specialized weapons training that they can use to threaten the safety of our nation in furtherance of an agenda of hate.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Mathias, “Phrase ‘White Nationalist’ Cut From Measure to Screen Military Enlistees,” December 19, 2019. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/senate-removes-white-nationalists-from-military-bill-aimed-at-screening-for-extremists\\_n\\_5dfab39be4b0eb2264d3a18d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/senate-removes-white-nationalists-from-military-bill-aimed-at-screening-for-extremists_n_5dfab39be4b0eb2264d3a18d)

### Assessing the Current Threat of White Supremacist Terror

In recent years, we have witnessed devastating violence carried out by individuals radicalized by white supremacist propaganda. This propaganda, found primarily online, is intended to recruit young people into an extremist worldview that portrays white people as being systematically replaced by nonwhite migrants—and people of color more broadly—and that demands urgent, radical, and violent action. This antidemocratic movement puts a premium on the type of training afforded by the U.S. Armed Forces. It is thus no surprise that hateful groups and individuals encourage their followers to join a branch of the military and that they target existing servicemembers for recruitment.

In 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented the largest number of active hate groups – 1,020 — since it began its annual census of these groups in 1990. Most alarming, the number of white nationalist groups rose by nearly 50%. These disturbing trends are driven by three major factors: rising anxiety over rapid demographic change in the United States; toxic political rhetoric that singles out and demonizes specific communities based on their immutable characteristics; and the unchecked proliferation of hateful propaganda and extremist misinformation on social media and the broader internet. All of these factors affect our servicemembers, just as they do the broader population in the United States.

White supremacist organizations appear to have enjoyed a measure of success in their ambitions of reaching members of the U.S. Armed Forces. According to a 2019 poll conducted by *The Military Times*, 36% of active-duty servicemembers who were surveyed reported seeing signs of white nationalism or racist ideology in the U.S. Armed Forces—a significant rise from the year before, when 22% reported witnessing these extremist views.<sup>2</sup> In the same survey, more than half of servicemembers of color reported experiencing incidents of racism or racist ideology, up from 42% in 2017.<sup>3</sup>

During this same period, the SPLC has documented an alarming, upward trend in white supremacist violence. Recent attacks in El Paso, Texas, Poway, California, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, are stark reminders of the threat posed by white supremacist ideology and those it motivates to act. Each of these attacks was inspired by white supremacist ideas, particularly animosity toward nonwhite migrants. The perpetrators in El Paso, Poway and Pittsburgh each were demonstrably influenced by the propaganda of white supremacist organizations and their leaders.

A number of additional plots by white supremacists have been thwarted. The arrest of Lt. Christopher Paul Hassan, a 49-year-old serving in the Coast Guard, provides a recent example of the threat posed by those radicalized by white supremacist materials who are currently active in

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<sup>2</sup> Leo Shane III, “Signs of White Supremacy, Extremism Up Again in Poll of Active Duty Troops,” February 6 2020. <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/06/signs-of-white-supremacy-extremism-up-again-in-poll-of-active-duty-troops/>

<sup>3</sup> Leo Shane III, “One in Four Troops Sees White Nationalism in the Ranks,” October 23, 2017. <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/10/23/military-times-poll-one-in-four-troops-sees-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>

the U.S. Armed Force.<sup>4</sup> Lt. Hassan, who had also spent time in the Marine Corps and the Army National Guard, pleaded guilty to federal gun and drug charges—including unlawful possession of unregistered silencers; unlawful possession of firearm silencers unidentified by a serial number; possession of a firearm by an addict and unlawful user of a controlled substance; and possession of a controlled substance—in October 2019.<sup>5</sup> He was sentenced to more than 13 years in prison in February 2020.<sup>6</sup> Lt. Hassan identified as a white nationalist and advocated for “focused violence” against journalists, Democratic politicians, professors, U.S. Supreme Court justices and “leftists” in order to establish a white ethnostate. He had been engaged with white supremacist ideologies before he joined the military in the 1980s.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) last year recognized the increased threat posed by white supremacist terrorism in the United States. In a September 19, 2019, document (*Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Targeting Terrorism and Targeted Violence*)—published roughly two months after a man in Texas killed 22 people in El Paso to stop the “cultural and ethnic replacement” of white people the United States—the DHS acknowledges that “[w]hite supremacist violent extremism, one type of racially- and ethnically-motivated violent extremism, is one of the most potent forces driving domestic terrorism. Lone attackers, as opposed to cells or organizations, generally perpetrate these kinds of attacks. But they are also part of a broader movement.”<sup>7</sup> The report concludes that domestic terrorism poses as large a threat to the United States as terrorism from overseas. This was a major course correction for the department. For years, the DHS downplayed the dangers posed by violent white supremacists, despite the warnings of its analysts. A 2009 report warned that the economic downturn and election of the nation’s first African-American president might provide fuel for rightwing extremists and that, amid the war on terror, rightwing extremists might “attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to boost their violent capabilities.”<sup>8</sup> Despite the report’s accuracy and prescient warnings, then-Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano retracted it under pressure from conservatives who claimed, falsely, that it portrayed them as a security threat.<sup>9</sup>

According to its own statements, the FBI has also prioritized white supremacist violence. Last July, FBI Director Christopher Wray noted at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that

<sup>4</sup> Dave Philipps, “Coast Guard Officer Plotted to Kill Democrats and Journalists, Prosecutors Say,” February 20, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/us/christopher-hasson-coast-guard.html>

<sup>5</sup> Christine Hauser, “Coast Guard Officer Called a ‘Domestic Terrorist’ Pleads Guilty to Gun and Drug Charges,” October 3, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/us/christopher-hasson-coast-guard-white-supremacist.html>

<sup>6</sup> Michael Levenson, “Former Coast Guard Officer Accused of Plotting Terrorism is Sentenced to 13 Years,” January 31, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/us/christopher-hasson-coast-guard-terrorism.html>

<sup>7</sup> “Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, September 19, 2019. Prepared by the Department of Homeland Security. [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_0920\\_plcy\\_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment,” April 7, 2009. Prepared by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch, Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division of the Department of Homeland Security. [https://web.archive.org/web/20110927124641/http://rogerhedgecock.com/resources/HSA\\_RightwingExtremism\\_Report\\_april2009.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20110927124641/http://rogerhedgecock.com/resources/HSA_RightwingExtremism_Report_april2009.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Eric Marrapodi, “Napolitano Apologizes to Veterans over ‘Extremist’ Flap,” April 24, 2009. <https://www.enn.com/2009/POLITICS/04/24/napolitano.am.legion/>

domestic terrorism arrests were roughly on par with the number made in relation to international terrorism cases. He told the committee that the FBI had already been involved in roughly 100 domestic terrorism cases and that most involved some form of white supremacy. Just last week, Wray told the House Judiciary Committee that the FBI has elevated racially motivated violent extremism to a “national threat priority.” “Not only is the terror threat diverse, it’s unrelenting,” he said.<sup>10</sup>

The spike in arrests of potential mass shooters made in the aftermath of the El Paso attack also illustrates the seriousness of the white supremacist threat. A survey conducted by HuffPost found that, in the four weeks following the August 2019 attack, more than 40 people were arrested for plotting mass killings. Roughly a dozen of those cases involved some form of rightwing ideology.<sup>11</sup>

It is critical that branches of the U.S. Armed Services treat the growing threat of white supremacy with the same seriousness as their colleagues in federal law enforcement.

#### **Dozens of Former and Active-Duty Military Personnel Active in Violent White Supremacist Groups**

The participation of active-duty personnel and veterans in white supremacist activity has long posed a serious threat to the public and other military personnel. Indeed, the Southern Poverty Law Center first began actively lobbying the Department of Defense to prohibit all military personnel from being members of, or participating in, the activities of white supremacist groups in 1986. While steps have since been taken to prevent racist extremists from entering the U.S. Armed Forces, numerous recent examples of violent white supremacists with current or former involvement in the military shows those responses have been inadequate.

Over the last two years, we have identified dozens of former and active-duty military personnel among the membership of some of the country’s most dangerous white supremacist groups. Those groups include the Atomwaffen Division, a neo-Nazi group whose members have allegedly been responsible for five murders since mid-2017. One of the people killed was a gay, Jewish college student named Blaze Bernstein who was stabbed more than 20 times.

Brandon Russell, who launched Atomwaffen in 2015 from an online forum called Iron March, served in the Florida Army National Guard. After his roommate Devon Arthurs killed the pair’s two other roommates—who were also members of Atomwaffen—police found a stash of explosive materials and homemade fuses. Inside a cooler labeled with Brandon’s name, they found hexamethylene triperoxide diamine, or HMTD, a homemade explosive used in past terror attacks, including the London bombing in 2005. A framed photo of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was found in Russell’s bedroom. Police released Russell after questioning,

<sup>10</sup> Tess Owens, “The FBI Just Put White Nationalists and Neo-Nazis on the Same Threat Level as ISIS,” February 6, 2020. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/3a8awn/the-fbi-just-put-white-nationalists-and-neo-nazis-on-the-same-threat-level-as-isis](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/3a8awn/the-fbi-just-put-white-nationalists-and-neo-nazis-on-the-same-threat-level-as-isis)

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Mathias and Ryan J. Reilly, “Over 40 People Have Been Arrested As Potential Mass Shooters Since El Paso,” August 31, 2019. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mass-shooting-plot-arrests-el-paso\\_n\\_5d66d1eae4b063c341f9f2da](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mass-shooting-plot-arrests-el-paso_n_5d66d1eae4b063c341f9f2da)

but only hours later he was arrested by Florida sheriff's deputies who found an AR-style assault rifle and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition in his car. He also possessed flyers that read "Don't prepare for exams, prepare for race war."<sup>12</sup>

According to Arthurs, Russell joined the National Guard in order to receive the kind of skills he would need to prepare for that potential race war. "He joined specifically for the knowledge and the training, and he wants to use that training against the government," Arthurs said during a police interrogation. He also told them that Russell had acquired guns and trained other Atomwaffen members in their use.<sup>13</sup>

Atomwaffen Division specifically targets members of the Armed Services, and its members are encouraged to enlist in the military to acquire specialized training. "The US military gives great training ... you learn how to fight, and survive," Joshua Beckett, an Atomwaffen member who formerly served as an Army combat engineer, told other members in the group's online chat.<sup>14</sup>

While Beckett appears to have left the military when he joined Atomwaffen, other members were still active in the Armed Forces while they were involved in the neo-Nazi group. Vasilios Pistoris was a Marine lance corporal when he became a member of the group's North Carolina cell. The search history of Pistoris's computer was highly disturbing; it included searches for information about the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik (who killed 77 people in 2011), the specific firearms equipment Breivik used in his attack, and manuals for building explosives and rifles.<sup>15</sup>

"Soldiers, criminals and workers make the best Nazis just a fact," Corwyn Storm Carver, then an active-duty member of the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, wrote in a chat with other Atomwaffen members in 2018. Carver also praised the actions of white supremacist terrorist Dylann Roof, who killed nine black worshippers in a Charleston, South Carolina, church in 2015, but added, "Shooting up a geriatrics in a church is a soft target."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A.C. Thompson, "An Atomwaffen Member Sketched a Map to Take the Neo-Nazis Down. What Path Officials Took is a Mystery," November 20, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>; Associated Press, "Florida Neo-Nazi Leader Gets 5 Years for Having Explosive Material," January 9, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/florida-neo-nazi-leader-gets-5-years-having-explosive-material-n836246>

<sup>13</sup> A.C. Thompson, "An Atomwaffen Member Sketched a Map to Take the Neo-Nazis Down. What Path Officials Took is a Mystery," November 20, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>

<sup>14</sup> A.C. Thompson, Ali Winston, and Jake Hanrahan, "Ranks of Notorious Hate Group Include Active-Duty Military," May 3, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/atomwaffen-division-hate-group-active-duty-military>

<sup>15</sup> Shawn Snow, "The neo-Nazi boot: Inside one Marine's descent into extremism," September 4, 2019. <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/09/04/the-neo-nazi-boot-inside-one-marines-descent-into-extremism/>

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Mathias, "Exclusive: Army Investigating Soldier's Alleged Leadership In Neo-Nazi Terror Group," May 3, 2019. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/atomwaffen-division-army-soldier-investigation-corwyn-storm-carver\\_n\\_5ccb5350e4b0e4d7572fde38](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/atomwaffen-division-army-soldier-investigation-corwyn-storm-carver_n_5ccb5350e4b0e4d7572fde38)

Altogether, investigators have found seven members of Atomwaffen who have served in the military—a significant number considering the group has likely ever had, at most, about 100 members at a time.<sup>17</sup> Because of their sophisticated weapons and explosives training, those members significantly increase the group’s potential to carry out deadly attacks.

Despite the Defense Department’s insistence that it is taking all the necessary actions to prevent extremists from operating within the ranks, Russell’s case demonstrates that military officials at times are ignoring—either willfully or through neglect—clear signs of extremist activist among servicemembers. Indeed, in an investigation launched after Russell’s arrest, the Florida National Guard found that Russell had an Atomwaffen Division tattoo but that it apparently failed to prompt any action on the part of the Guard. The investigation, acquired by ProPublica, also found that Russell had expressed “hatred for homosexuality and ‘faggots’” and “seemed very anxious to receive body armor, and keep his military issued gear.” Nevertheless, investigators concluded that the Guard had not neglected its duties by allowing Russell to continue to serve.

Russell has since been sentenced to five years in prison on charges related to the explosive materials found in the apartment he shared with Arthurs and other Atomwaffen members.<sup>18</sup> From prison, he has attempted to send instructions for building explosives to another member of the neo-Nazi group.<sup>19</sup>

Atomwaffen Division is one of a growing number of groups that embrace violence as a tool that will ultimately help them foment a race war. They are one of many groups that believe society should be pushed to collapse, providing them the opportunity to build an all-white, non-Jewish ethnostate. Like Atomwaffen Division, they organize themselves into networks of clandestine cells, each charged with committing targeted acts of violence they believe will sow societal discord and ultimately attract more white people to their ranks. It is worth noting that not all white supremacist extremists who promote revolutionary violence belong to hate groups. In fact, the numbers radicalized through online extremist communities and propaganda likely far outnumber those who belong to formal groups.

We are especially concerned that terroristic, cell-style white supremacist groups that embrace paramilitarism, conduct tactical training camps for members, and continually encourage members to carry out attacks against both people and the nation’s infrastructure will attract veterans and active-duty servicemembers to their ranks. The recent arrests of two trained soldiers—one from the United States and one from Canada—who belong to a terroristic white supremacist group called the Base have only heightened our fears.

<sup>17</sup> A.C. Thompson, “An Atomwaffen Member Sketched a Map to Take the Neo-Nazis Down. What Path Officials Took is a Mystery,” November 20, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>

<sup>18</sup> Associated Press, “Florida Neo-Nazi leader gets 5 years for having explosive material,” January 9, 2019. <https://apnews.com/6380120849a4470f9e569676718889c9>

<sup>19</sup> Janet Reitman, “How Did a Convicted Neo-Nazi Release Propaganda From Prison?” May 25, 2018. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/how-did-a-convicted-neo-nazi-release-propaganda-from-prison-628437/>

Brian Mark Lemley Jr., who was previously a Cavalry scout in the U.S. Army, and Patrik Jordan Mathews, a combat engineer in the Canadian Army Reserve until last August, were both arrested in January on federal gun charges in Maryland. According to an FBI investigation, on an encrypted chat, members of the Base “discussed, among other things, creating a white ethno-state, committing acts of violence against minority communities (including African-Americans and Jewish Americans), the organization’s military-style training camps, and ways to make improvised explosive devices.” Lemley once wrote, “I day dream about killing so much that I frequently walk in the wron[t sic] direction for extended periods of time at work.” Mathews told members they should be prepared to “Derail some fucking trains, kill some people, and poison some water supplies.” He continued, “If you want the white race to survive you’re going to have to do your fucking part.”<sup>20</sup>

One day after Lemley and Mathews were arrested along with another Base member, authorities arrested three other members of the group in Georgia for conspiring to murder a couple involved in antifascist activism.

In addition, in the Spring of 2019, 11 servicemembers associated with Identity Evropa, a white nationalist hate group, were identified and reported to be under investigation by military officials. Those servicemembers included a lance corporal in the Marines, a master sergeant in the Air Force, a specialist and a physician in the Army, National Guard members in Minnesota and Texas, and two Army ROTC cadets.<sup>21</sup> Their affiliation with white supremacy came to light only after online correspondence among Identity Evropa members was released, underscoring both the widespread presence of white supremacists and the inconsistent nature of efforts to detect and weed out extremists from the U.S. Armed Forces.

#### **A Long History of Military Training for White Supremacist Leaders**

Rightwing extremists poisoning the ranks of the military, or extremists using their military training to further their racist and often-violent ambitions, is not a new problem. Historically, many of the white power movement’s most infamous leaders have served in the military.

Frazier Glenn Miller served for 20 years in the U.S. Army, including two tours of duty in Vietnam and 13 years as a Green Beret. Afterward, he founded the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and, with the help of active-duty soldiers, began to amass illegal weapons and conduct military training. Miller, who also founded the White Patriot Party, had ties to The Order, the white supremacist terrorist organization whose members carried out armored car robberies and assassinated Denver radio show host Alan Berg. During a trial for criminal contempt in 1986, a witness testified that he had procured weapons and explosives for Miller, including 13 armor-piercing anti-tank rockets, from military personnel. Miller later served three

<sup>20</sup> United States of America v. Brian Mark Lemley, Jr., Patrik Jordan Mathews, and William Garfield Bilbrough IV. <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6664597-Motion-for-Detention-The-Base-Maryland.html>

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Mathias, “Exposed: Military Investigating 4 More Servicemen For Ties To White Nationalist Group,” April 27, 2019. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa\\_n\\_5cc1a87ee4b0764d31dd839c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa_n_5cc1a87ee4b0764d31dd839c)

years in prison for his involvement in a plot to kill SPLC founder Morris Dees. He and other Klansmen were flushed out of a mobile home in Missouri, where the FBI found C-4 explosives, hand grenades, automatic weapons and ammunition. In November 2015, Miller was sentenced to death on murder charges after he killed three people during an April 13, 2014, attack on Jewish facilities in Overland Park, Kansas.

Another well-known white supremacist, Louis Beam, who popularized the “leaderless resistance” model of white supremacist terrorism that is experiencing a revival in much of the movement, served as a helicopter gunner in the Army during the Vietnam War. Shortly after his return, he joined the United Klans of America and went on to become one of the most influential leaders in the white power movement during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>22</sup> He maintained a close relationship with Richard Butler, the head of the Aryan Nations who was himself an Army veteran.<sup>23</sup> The Northwest Front, a white nationalist hate group that aims to build a white homeland in the Pacific Northwest, was founded by Army veteran Harold Covington.<sup>24</sup> Michael Tubbs, the leader of the Florida chapter of the neo-Confederate hate group League of the South, is a former Green Beret with expertise in demolitions. In 1990, Tubbs was arrested on charges related to a huge cache of weapons and explosives he had amassed, including 45 pounds of C-4 explosive, an anti-aircraft machine gun, and 25 pounds of TNT.<sup>25</sup> Authorities believed the arsenal was stolen from the military. A letter found by authorities suggested that Tubbs was planning to use the arsenal to outfit his group, Knights of the New Order, which was dedicated to “fostering the welfare of the white Aryan Race.”<sup>26</sup>

Many of these leaders have spoken candidly about the value U.S. military training adds to their racist organizations. Tom Metzger, an Army veteran who founded the neo-Nazi group White Aryan Resistance (WAR), told the author of a 2012 book that he estimated about “10 percent of the army and Marines ... are racist extremists of some variety.” “I would encourage them to join the military, if they have a scratch they can’t itch,” he said of his followers, “Then go in to bring some training back to the US and make the federal government aware of our existence.” Speaking with the same writer, neo-Nazi Billy Roper revealed that within his group, White Revolution, there were about a dozen members who served in the military. “Some of them have tattoos” of racist symbols, he said, “because anyone can walk in and get in the military now.” Two military members of his group were reprimanded for having swastika tattoos, he said.

<sup>22</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Louis Beam.” <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>

<sup>23</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Richard Butler.” <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/richard-butler>

<sup>24</sup> Ryan Lenz, “Harold Covington, founder of white separatist group, dies at 64,” July 25, 2018.

<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/07/25/harold-covington-founder-white-separatist-group-dies-64>

<sup>25</sup> Heidi Beirich, “League of the South to Protest ‘Southern Demographic Displacement,’” August 21, 2013.

<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2013/08/21/league-south-protest-%E2%80%9Csouthern-demographic-displacement%E2%80%9D>

<sup>26</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Michael Ralph Tubbs.” <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/michael-ralph-tubbs>

But when they had them altered and made into Sonnenrads—a widely used symbol among neo-Nazis—both were allowed to reenter the military.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Department of Defense's Inadequate Response to the Threat of White Supremacist Infiltration in the Military**

The SPLC has long advocated for the Department of Defense to take strong action to prevent individuals who harbor extremist ideologies, including white supremacy, from serving. In 1986, we urged then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to investigate the participation of servicemembers involved with Frazier Glenn Miller's KKK paramilitary activities and to issue a prohibition on active-duty personnel from membership or participation in any Klan group.<sup>28</sup> Secretary Weinberger did issue a directive instructing servicemembers that they “must reject participation in white supremacy, neo-Nazi and other such groups which espouse or attempt to create overt discrimination.” He told military personnel they were barred from “active participation” in these groups. However, as University of Chicago assistant professor Kathleen Belew explains in her book *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, “[T]he directive said nothing about other kinds of actions that undergirded white power activity—such as membership excluding ‘organizing or leading,’ distributing propaganda, or displaying white power symbols.” As a result, “Active-duty personnel continued both passive and active participation in the white power movement.”<sup>29</sup>

In 1994, six months before the Oklahoma City bombing by Gulf War veteran Timothy McVeigh, we wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno to warn of the growing threat of domestic terrorism. In the wake of Oklahoma City and the murder of a black couple by skinheads serving as active-duty paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne in 1995, the Defense Department tightened regulations on the participation of active-duty servicemembers in extremist activities.

But the increased scrutiny on white supremacist affiliation did not last. Facing recruitment shortages during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military relaxed recruitment standards and largely turned a blind eye toward the extremist beliefs or affiliations of potential recruits.

In 2006, the SPLC released a report highlighted the continuing presence of white supremacists in the military and, once again, reached out to ask the Department of Defense to implement a zero tolerance policy on white supremacy.<sup>30</sup> Then-Undersecretary of Defense David

<sup>27</sup> Matt Kennard, *Irregular Army: How the US Military Recruited Neo-Nazis, Gang Members, and Criminals to Fight the War on Terror* (London: Verso, 2015), 24-25.

<sup>28</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center. SPLC to Honorable Caspar Weinberger, Montgomery, AL, April 15, 1986. <http://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/images/dynamic/intel/weinberger.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 137.

<sup>30</sup> David Holthouse, “Several High Profile Racist Extremists Serve in the U.S. Military,” August 11, 2006. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/several-high-profile-racist-extremists-serve-us-military>; Southern Poverty Law Center, *Letter to David S.C. Chu*, October 12, 2006. <http://www.splcenter.org/images/dynamic/main/re101206.pdf>

S. C. Chu dismissed the SPLC's reporting as "inaccurate and misleadingly alarmist" and claimed, despite our documentation of extremists actively serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, that a zero-tolerance policy was already in place. Again in 2008 and 2009, the SPLC wrote letters to the Department of Defense urging an investigation, with little result.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly, the problem persists to this day.

We urge this Subcommittee and this Congress to exercise its oversight responsibilities and to use its powers to ensure that every branch of the military take the strongest action possible to prevent the infiltration of white supremacists and to weed out those who are already active. They represent a serious and ongoing threat not only to military order and the values that servicemembers are sworn to uphold but to the safety of every American.

Thank you.

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<sup>31</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center. SPLC to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Montgomery, AL, November 26, 2008. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2008/12/02/letter-secretary-gates-extremists-continue-infiltrate-military>; Southern Poverty Law Center. SPLC to Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, Senate Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Homeland Security, and House Armed Services Committee, Montgomery, AL, July 10, 2009. [http://www.splcenter.org/images/dynamic/main/SPLC\\_letter\\_extremists.pdf](http://www.splcenter.org/images/dynamic/main/SPLC_letter_extremists.pdf)

## LECIA J BROOKS

### **Southern Poverty Law Center • Montgomery, Alabama • 2004-Present**

Non-profit civil rights advocacy organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society.

### **Chief Workplace Transformation Officer (2019-Present)**

Develop a workplace culture of inclusiveness and ensure a sustainable infrastructure that supports the Centers' ongoing focus on diversity and equity.

### **Outreach Director (2010-2019)**

Develop strategic relationships with, and serve as a liaison to, allied advocacy groups and organizations. Advise and work with SPLC's Legal, Teaching Tolerance and Intelligence projects on community-engagement initiatives. Manage SPLC on Campus program supporting non-violent activism on college campuses.

### **Interim Director, Teaching Tolerance (2009-2010)**

Led editorial team in the development and distribution of free educational materials to teachers in the U.S. *Teaching Tolerance* magazine is mailed to 400,000+ educators twice annually, and the website is visited by over 150,000 people annually.

### **Director, Civil Rights Memorial Center (2005-Present)**

Manage program and operations at SPLC's museum and adjacent Civil Rights Memorial honoring martyrs of the modern American Civil Rights Movement.

### **Director, *Mix It Up* (2004-2005)**

Developed and implemented a strategic media and communication strategy resulting in a successful yearlong campaign for the award-winning Teaching Tolerance program. This youth activist program consisted of three components: grantmaking, dialogue and organizing.

### **National Conference for Community & Justice • Los Angeles, CA • 1992-2004**

Human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and hatred.

### **Director of Special Projects (2000-2004)**

- Initiated and led a series of six-week anti-hate courses expressly for first-time juvenile hate crime offenders and their parents/guardians at request of the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office
- Designed and directed two 1-week residential camp programs for girls ages 12-16 to improve self-concept and combat the negative effects of sexism for the Tyra Banks Foundation
- Designed and directed support group for queer and questioning youth to examine the intersections of identity and safely explore LGBT community space with trained queer adults facilitators.

### **Youth Program Specialist (1992-2000)**

- Led 40 Chicago-area youth through a dialogue process examining racial stereotypes for a special taping of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*

- Directed 10-month Youth Leadership Program documented by a national film production company series entitled "*The Truth About Hate*," exploring youth homophobia.

**Diversity Matters • 2000-2007**

Independent consulting firm engaging groups in conversation and reflection on intersectionality and positive identity development.

- Client list includes: Marlborough School for Girls, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Montgomery, Alabama Chapter of NOW, University of California, Riverside, U.S. Department of Justice, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Allies, U.S. Department of Education, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance, and the Gill Foundation.

**Los Angeles Unified School District • Los Angeles, CA • 1987-1992**

Served recently arrived immigrant 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in a bilingual (English/Spanish) classroom.

**EDUCATION**

Elementary Education Program - National University, Los Angeles, CA  
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science - Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA  
Foreign Study - Schiller College Heidelberg, Germany and Madrid, Spain

**MEDIA APPEARANCES (partial list)**

Al Jazeera America • USA Today • Los Angeles Times • Clarion-Ledger • Montgomery Advertiser • The Oprah Winfrey Show • HuffPost Live • The Grio.com

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Leadership Montgomery, Montgomery, AL, Graduate • Los Angeles County Network Against Hate Crime, Los Angeles, CA, Co-Chair • Los Angeles Women's Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, Grants Review Committee Member • Liberty Hill Foundation, Santa Monica, CA, Community Funding Board Member • Alabama Civil Justice Foundation, Montgomery, AL, Board Member • Aid to Inmate Mothers, Montgomery, AL, Board Member

**PUBLICATIONS**

Brooks, L. (editor) 2012, *God Loves Uganda* Discussion Guide. New York, NY: Full Credit Productions  
Brooks, Lecia, *Civil Rights Activity Book*, (2013). Montgomery, AL: The Southern Poverty Law Center

Aguilar, J., Arana, O., Briggs, S. E., Brooks, L., Bauer, M., et al. (eds.) (2008) *Viva La Causa* Teacher's Guide. Montgomery, AL: The Southern Poverty Law Center.

Brooks, L. (2007). *The School Year That Changed a Nation: The Little Rock Nine Interview with Minnijean Brown Trickey*. Teaching Tolerance Magazine, 32, 20-25. Montgomery, AL: The Southern Poverty Law Center.

Brooks, L. (ed). (2006) *Juliette Hampton Morgan: "A White Woman Who Understood."* Montgomery, AL: The Southern Poverty Law Center.

### CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Financing of Domestic Terrorism.

U.S. House Subcommittee on National Security, International Development and Monetary Policy (Committee on Financial Services) Jan. 15, 2020

Confronting White Supremacy (Part II): Adequacy of the Federal Response.

U.S. House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (Committee on Oversight and Reform) June 04, 2019

### PRESENTATIONS (partial listing)

#### ***Achievements of the Civil Rights Movement***

June 1, 2016	The Picture House	Pelham, NY
May 14, 2016	Seattle University	Seattle, WA
April 18, 2016	Whitworth College	Portland, OR
July 16-22, 2015	U.S. Embassy, Berlin	Germany (various)
January 24, 2014	U.S. Embassy, Berlin	Germany (various)

#### ***Tolerance Education***

January 24, 2016	Ethical Society of STL	St. Louis, MO
February 25, 2015	Georgia College	Milledgeville, GA
September 28, 2013	U.S. Embassy, Warsaw	Poland (various)

#### ***Diversity, Tolerance and Extremism***

April 15-27, 2013	U.S. Embassy, Athens	Greece (various)
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#### ***Hate and Extremism in the U.S.***

May 23, 2017	Antirrasistisk Senter	Oslo, Norway
May 4, 2017	Kent State University	Kent, OH
April 18, 2017	New Jersey City Univ.	Newark, NJ
April 7, 2017	Burgoa Library	Oaxaca, Mexico
March 16, 2017	Augusta University	Augusta, GA
September 17, 2016	Univ. of Richmond	Richmond, VA
August 4, 2016	NABJ/NAHJ	Washington, DC

July 1, 2016	NAIS	Washington, DC
April 22, 2016	Ohio State University	Marion, OH
April 15, 2015	Missouri State Univ.	Springfield, MO
April 1, 2015	Temple Shalom	Chevy Chase, MD
October 16, 2014	Skirball Cultural Center	Los Angeles, CA
October 13, 2014	Marcus Jewish Center	Atlanta, GA
October 6, 2014	East Tennessee State	Johnson City, TN
September 17, 2014	Jacksonville State	Jacksonville, AL
November 15, 2013	Univ of Southern Miss.	Hattiesburg, MS
October 29, 2013	Univ of Central Arkansas	Little Rock, AR
August 22, 2013	Marcus Jewish Center	Atlanta, GA
July 17, 2013	D.A.R.E. Conference	Cincinnati, OH
April 4, 2013	Arkansas Fair Housing	Little Rock, AR
February 9, 2013	First Unitarian Church	Dallas, TX
January 27, 2013	Nicolet College	Rhineland, WI
January 18, 2013	Phillips Exeter Academy	Exeter, PA
January 30, 2013	Moravian Academy	Bethlehem, PA

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

January 15, 2015	Ctr for Faith Studies	Omaha, NE
January 17, 2014	Congregation B'nai Israel	Jonesboro, GA
January 21, 2013	Topeka Center for Peace	Topeka, KS
January 16, 2012	City of Davis	Davis, CA
January 17, 2011	Walmart	Bentonville, AR

**Black History Month**

February 10, 2016	North Dakota State Univ.	Fargo, ND
February 10, 2015	Donaldson Correctional	Birmingham, AL
February 8, 2014	U.S. Embassy	Frankfurt, Germany
February 6, 2013	Westminster College	Salt Lake City, UT
February 11, 2013	University of Alabama	Tuscaloosa, AL
February 20, 2013	Bridge Builders	Montgomery, AL

**Museum Gallery/Exhibit Opening***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act*

Breman Holocaust and Heritage Museum	Atlanta, GA
March, 2015	

*The Scottsboro Boys: Outside the Protective Circle of Humanity*

November 19, 2013	Jackson State University	Jackson, MS
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*Speaking Volumes: Tolerating Hate*

October 17, 2013	Lewis-Clark College	Lewiston, ID
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*Hate in America: the Klan and White Supremacy*

September 12, 2013	B'ham Southern College	Birmingham, AL
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**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES:** Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. As a matter of committee policy, the House Committee on Armed Services further requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose whether they are a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, directors, officers, advisors, or resident agents) of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing. Committee policy also requires nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of any contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants), or payments originating with any organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness.

Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number), will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee. Witnesses may list additional grants, contracts, or payments on additional sheets, if necessary. Please complete this form electronically.

**Hearing Date:** February 11th, 2020

**Hearing Subject:**

White Supremacists in the Military - How do the Services Identify a Problem and Change the Behavior before this becomes a Pervasive Issue?

**Witness name:** Lecia J. Brooks

**Position/Title:** Chief Workplace Transformation Officer

**Capacity in which appearing:** (check one)

Individual       Representative

**If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the organization or entity represented:**

Southern Poverty Law Center

**Federal Contract or Grant Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) or grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

**2020**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**2019**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**2018**

Federal grant/ contract	Federal agency	Dollar value	Subject of contract or grant
N/A			

**Foreign Government Contract or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from a foreign government, received during the current and two previous calendar years and related to the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

2020

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

2019

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

2018

Foreign contract/ payment	Foreign government	Dollar value	Subject of contract or payment
N/A			

**Fiduciary Relationships:** If you are a fiduciary of any organization or entity that may have an interest in the subject matter of the hearing, please provide the following information:

Organization or entity	Brief description of the fiduciary relationship
N/A	

**Organization or Entity Contract, Grant or Payment Information:** If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts or grants (including subcontracts or subgrants) or payments originating from an organization or entity, whether public or private, that has a material interest in the subject matter of the hearing, received during the current and two previous calendar years, please provide the following information:

2020

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

2019

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

2018

Contract/grant/ payment	Entity	Dollar value	Subject of contract, grant or payment
N/A			

JOINT STATEMENT OF

MR. GARRY REID  
DIRECTOR FOR DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE  
(COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT & SECURITY)  
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE  
& SECURITY

AND

MS. STEPHANIE MILLER  
DIRECTOR, ACCESSIONS POLICY  
OFFICE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL POLICY

BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES  
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

EXTREMISM IN THE MILITARY

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Subcommittee. We are pleased to appear before you today to provide testimony on this important issue. In January 2020, the Department provided a report to the House and Senate Appropriation Committees titled, "*Military Personnel and Extremist Ideologies*." In that report the Department emphasized the importance it places on treating all personnel with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment free from unlawful discrimination and maltreatment. The Department and the Military Services have policies expressly prohibiting actively advocating supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology and causes. We continue to explore means by which we can enhance our ability to monitor and enforce these guiding principles.

The life-cycle for military personnel, from accessions processing to separation, is a complex process which is constantly evolving. The beginning of the life-cycle starts with each new member, whether enlisted or officer, undergoing a thorough screening process to ensure they meet the high standards of today's military. Our data show that only about 29 percent of today's youth, 17-24 year old, meet our standards without some type of an accession waiver. Our high standards and screening processes help ensure only the most qualified and deserving individuals are allowed to serve. This multi-tiered screening process enables a holistic view of each applicant. Using the tools available, we believe we have been effective at screening for individuals that have extremist ideologies or support extremist groups.

Recruiters play a critical role in assessing the qualification and intent of an applicant. Every applicant is interviewed by a recruiter in an effort to obtain as much information and documentation as possible about the individual's basic qualifications for military service; this includes medical history, education credentials, local law enforcement involvement, family status, and work history. During this process recruiters look for additional indicators or issues that may

warrant additional scrutiny including a review of an individual's tattoos, scars, or other body markings, and if warranted, questions regarding the origin, meaning, and symbology associated with those markings, as they may represent a history or active involvement with a criminal gang or extremist group. At our Military Entrance Processing Stations, applicants then undergo a full physical by trained medical professionals and a background search of law enforcement and other records. Applicants answer questions about any involvement with law enforcement agencies including arrests, charges, citations, parole or probation, detention, and any other form of potentially adverse adjudication regardless of the outcome. Additionally, all applicants undergo an advanced fingerprint check, which provides a preliminary review of a history of any involvement with law enforcement, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Screening culminates with a Tier 3 background check (or higher if warranted) which screens recruits for extremist ties, including FBI investigative and criminal history files checks; terrorist and subversive activities checks; local law enforcement agency checks; and a review of the Violent Gang file of the National Criminal Information Center.

Upon an individual's entry into the Armed Services, the Department, the Military Services, and the individual have a shared responsibility to ensure members are afforded the opportunity to serve with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment. Ever mindful that service members still retain constitutional rights and civil liberties, such as freedom of speech and freedom of peaceful assembly, those rights must be balanced with the unique need of the military to maintain good order and discipline in order to prevail in combat. And, in that manner, service members are held to a higher standard than their civilian peers, as guided by Department of Defense policy and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

To that end, the Department's overarching guidance is clear, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1325.06, "Handling Dissident and Protest Activities Among Members of the Armed Forces," provides that military personnel "**must reject active participation and must not actively advocate** supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes, including those that advance, encourage, or advocate illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin or those that advance, encourage, or advocate the use of force, violence, or criminal activity or otherwise advance efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights." The instruction goes on to articulate that active advocacy and/or participation in these causes may result in discipline, including administrative separation or criminal justice action, as "[c]ommanders have the authority to employ the full range of administrative and disciplinary actions," in this regard.

Beyond its overarching guidance, the Department continues to work with the Services and other agencies to provide commanders and senior military leaders the tools needed to keep informed about the activities or adverse behaviors of service members. Commanders working with key stakeholders, such as the Service Investigative Offices, are swift to take appropriate action when warranted. We are gaining additional insights on service members through the deployment of new technologies and have explored additional testing and screening techniques that assess a range of personality dimensions to identify applicants who best fit with the military's culture of treating all personnel with dignity and respect. Examples of critical personality dimensions exhibiting applicants fit with the Department's culture on inclusivity, respect, and dignity include: commitment to serve, order, selflessness, and tolerance. In conjunction with more traditional qualification batteries, these tools can be utilized as part of a "whole person" applicant screening process and can tell us a great deal about the likelihood of successfully completing

basic training, the first term of enlistment, and the ability of the applicant to adapt to rules, regulations, and military culture.

The Department also established the DoD Insider Threat Management and Analysis Center (DITMAC) that receives and analyzes applicable cases, allowing for timely reporting of serious threats including terrorism and criminal affiliation as well as criminal conduct. The Continuous Evaluation System allows for a constant monitoring of Service members including incidents that may have occurred outside the purview of military law enforcement; the Department continues to explore additional data sources (to include social media) for Continuous Evaluation and already includes criminal, terrorist, and subversive activities checks. Military law enforcement officials continue to foster stronger and more trusting partnerships with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies including the National Gang Intelligence Center and the National Joint Terrorism Task Force. Collectively these actions and progress showcase increased interest and emphasis by the Department, as well as, enhanced federal capabilities regarding the tracking and reporting of real and potential cause for concern. In collaboration with the FBI Behavior Analysis Unit, DoD's Personnel Security Research Center issued policy recommendations that were enacted that clearly define several behaviors of concern which, when observed, are reported to appropriate agency security officials. More than 40 DoD Components have established insider threat programs that assess reports and share the information with security personnel for appropriate actions.

DoD remains committed to ensuring that all personnel are treated with dignity and respect, in an inclusive environment free from unlawful discrimination and maltreatment. This effort is accomplished while keeping each person's civil liberties intact. While this is not always an easy endeavor, it is critical to protecting our service members and those our service members are sworn to protect.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes our statement. We are happy to answer any question you or members of the Subcommittee may have at this time. We thank you for your outstanding and continuing support for the men and women of the Department of Defense.

**Garry Reid**  
**Director for Defense Intelligence (Intelligence and Security)**  
**Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence**

Garry Reid is currently serving as the Director for Defense Intelligence (Intelligence and Security) (DDI (I&S)), reporting directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)). In this capacity he is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy and resources to conduct HUMINT, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, intelligence analysis, intelligence sharing, and partner engagement programs. On behalf of the USD(I), Mr. Reid oversees the activities of DoD intelligence and related elements, coordinates these activities within the US Intelligence community and US interagency, and provides regular reporting of these activities to Congress. Prior to this assignment, Mr. Reid served as a Special Assistant for Mission Integration, advising the USD(I) on issues concerning warfighter support, intelligence and security, technical collection and special programs, and intelligence strategy, programs and resources.

Prior to joining the office of the USD(I), Mr. Reid served nine years in the office of the Under Secretary for Policy (USD(P)), culminating as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. He was the principal advisor to the ASD(SO/LIC) for DoD policies, plans, authorities, and resources related to special operations, low intensity conflict and other activities as specified by the Secretary of Defense.

From April 2009 - June 2012 he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism. He advised the ASD (SOLIC/IC), Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and the Secretary of Defense on DoD policies, plans, authorities, and resources related to special operations and irregular warfare, with special emphasis on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, sensitive special operations, and information operations. He further served as the principal counterterrorism crisis manager for the Office of the ASD(SOLIC/IC).

Mr. Reid joined the Office of the Secretary of Defense in January 2007 after 28 years of military service in Special Operations. A career member of the Senior Executive Service, he has served as the Director for Special Operations Policy, the Director for Counterterrorism Policy, and the Principal Director for Special Operations Capabilities. In these roles, he provided advice and assistance to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the oversight of special operations and irregular warfare activities within the Department of Defense.

**Ms. Stephanie P. Miller**  
**Accession Policy Director**

Ms. Stephanie Miller serves as the Director of Military Accession Policy, a component of the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy. A member of the Senior Executive Service, she is responsible for Department of Defense policies and programs relating to the overall recruitment and accession of both officer and enlisted personnel.

Prior to assuming this position, Ms. Miller served as a Special Assistant to both Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Ashton Carter where she was responsible for liaison to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and for oversight of a broad spectrum of programs to include Military and Civilian Personnel Policy, Military Force Readiness, Defense Health Affairs, Reserve Affairs, Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and Department of Defense (DoD) and Veteran Affairs interagency cooperation.

Ms. Miller's career includes leadership positions as the DoD Director of Diversity and Inclusion Management, Deputy Director for Navy Diversity, and Director, Navy Women's Policy. Ms. Miller also served as a Defense Legislative Fellow to Senator Susan Collins (ME), responsible for defense, veteran, and foreign policy objectives in Senator Collins' positions on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee (Defense Subcommittee), and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

From 2006 to 2009, Ms. Miller served as the Director, of the Navy's Task Force Life/Work (TFLW) program. Her work on TFLW, which included expanding post-partum operational deferment for service women from 4 to 12 months, mandatory lactation support programs, and Congressional approval of the Career Intermission Program, Paternity Leave, and Post 9/11 GI Bill Transferability earned this program the Families & Work Institute's Work/Life Legacy Award and the Working Mother Media Work/Life Excellence Award.

Ms. Miller previously served in the Navy as a Surface Warfare Officer on USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52) and with DESTROYER SQUADRON 28 embarked on USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Ms. Miller has a degree in English literature and Business Administration from Villanova University and a graduate degree in Human Resources Development and Adult Education from The George Washington University. She obtained her national Professional Human Resources (PHR) certification in 2009. Ms. Miller's contributions to the Department were recognized with award of the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service in 2015. Ms. Miller is married to Colby Miller and has three children; Anne Marie, Charlotte, and Paul David.

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**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

**MR. JOE E. ETHRIDGE  
CHIEF, INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, UNITED STATES ARMY CRIMINAL  
INVESTIGATION COMMAND**

**BEFORE THE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SECOND SESSION, 116TH CONGRESS**

**ALARMING INCIDENTS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE MILITARY – HOW TO  
STOP IT?**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this topic. As the Chief, Criminal Intelligence Division, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), I have a vested interest in crime prevention and readiness.

In early 2019, Army CID observed a small increase in criminal investigations initiated with Soldier participation in extremist activities as a component (seven investigations in 2019 in comparison to 2.4 per year in the FY 2014-2018 period). During the same time period, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) notified CID of an increase in domestic terrorism investigations with Soldiers or former Soldiers as suspects. In May 2019, the Provost Marshal General of the Army and I briefed the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) and members of the Army staff on the CID and FBI observations. The VCSA directed the formation of a working group to review current policies and procedures to prevent and address extremism in the ranks.

The working group recommended several adjustments to the Army policy for Soldier participation in extremist activities stated in Chapter 4-12, Army Regulation (AR) 600-20 (Army Command Policy). The revision of AR 600-20 is scheduled for release in the second quarter, FY2020 period. The policy places specific responsibilities on Commanders, to include:

1. Educating/training Soldiers on the Army's Military Equal Opportunity policy. Our Soldiers must know the standard.
2. Reporting of observed incidents of extremist activity to CID. The CID will identify extremist groups and assess those that are likely to resolve to violence. Additionally, CID will inform the FBI and other law enforcement partners when a Soldier is being separated due to extremist activities.
3. Advising Soldiers that participation in extremist activity will be taken into consideration when writing evaluation reports, may impact decisions on leadership assignments, may result in suspension or revocation of security clearances, will be reported to law enforcement authorities, and may result in administrative separation or criminal prosecution.
4. Counseling Soldiers when indicators of extremist activity are identified, in order to prevent violations of Army policy and/or criminal acts.

In order to implement the policy and protect our Soldiers, all the elements of the system must be present. Soldiers should know and clearly understand the Army's anti-discrimination policy to preserve good order and discipline in the unit. Counseling must be employed early, when indicators are present, to prevent extremist acts. Finally, the CID should be notified when extremist activities are observed and documented.

The CID identifies Soldiers suspected of participating in extremist activities in multiple ways, to include chain of command reporting, local police, the media, public-facing social media searches, tip-line reports, and FBI domestic terrorism investigative reporting. The CID greatly values the partnership and contributions of the FBI. The FBI welcomed CID to expand our partnership, traditionally centered on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force and the National Gang Intelligence Center. In 2019, CID added agent and analyst representation in the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit. The FBI relationship ensures timely notification of Army personnel suspected of crimes related to domestic terrorism.

The majority of the Soldiers identified as participating in extremist activities are not subjects of criminal investigations. The more common scenario is participation in online forums or membership in an organization expressing extremist or supremacist views. In these instances, CID notifies commanders via information report for action in accordance with the Army policy described previously. The CID tracks the notifications for crime prevention purposes.

In summary, CID has increased collection efforts, informed Army leadership of our observations, participated in the review and changes to Army policy, expanded our relationship with law enforcement partners, and made notifications to Commanders. Additionally, CID has formulated a request to the Army Inspector General to add unit implementation of extremist activity policy (encapsulated in Army Regulation 600-20) as a focus area for the next inspection cycle. The Army is postured to identify extremist activity in the ranks and has both the policy and leadership tools to prevent emergence as a pervasive issue.

Joe E. Ethridge, Jr.  
U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command

Mr. Ethridge serves as the Chief, Criminal Intelligence Division, United States Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC). He is responsible for providing criminal intelligence, domestic threat and law enforcement information support through collaborative efforts for Army customers. He and his team provide analytic support to prevent and solve crimes of Army interest. Finally, he maintains the liaison and fusion points between the Army and partners in the law enforcement and intelligence communities for criminal threat information sharing.

Prior to assuming his current duties, Mr. Ethridge retired from the United States Army as a Military Police Colonel after 30 years of experience in leading law enforcement and criminal investigative organizations and operations both domestically and internationally. He served in operational assignments in Egypt, Haiti, Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. As a Colonel he commanded, in sequence, the Department of Defense Criminal Investigation Task Force, the 701<sup>st</sup> Military Police Group (CID), and Task Force Guardian (CJTF-101) in Afghanistan. His military career culminated as the Deputy Commander, USACIDC, at Quantico, VA.

He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Central Arkansas, a Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the Army War College. Decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Ranger Tab.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

STATEMENT OF  
CHRISTOPHER J. MCMAHON  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE  
NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE (NCIS)  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
OF THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ON  
WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE MILITARY  
FEBRUARY 11, 2020

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) protects U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps operational readiness and current and future warfighting capabilities from being degraded by terrorism, foreign intelligence activities, or criminal activity. NCIS' ability to collect, process, and provide timely, high-quality and actionable information to the senior leaders of the Department of Navy and its military commanders, through investigations, operations, and source networks, ensures NCIS remains a critically relevant and essential element of the Department's continued success. The Director, NCIS, reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy and oversees a global presence of civilian special agents and professional staff.

With regard to domestic extremism, over the course of Fiscal Year 2018, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service experienced an increase in the number of domestic extremism related reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) involving Department of Defense-affiliated personnel. In response to these referrals, and to more accurately reflect the scope of the incidents, NCIS established the unique case category *Domestic Terrorism* for investigative and operational reporting purposes. NCIS generally defines domestic terrorism as terrorism perpetrated by individuals and groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.

NCIS investigates crimes associated with domestic extremist organizations when there is an apparent Federal violation, identified violent extremist ideology, and an active service member or current Department of Navy civilian employee who has expressed an aspiration to further the identified violent ideology by threats, acts of violence, or other enabling criminal activity. For instances in which a crime is suspected, a general crimes investigation under the appropriate case category for the crime is initiated. NCIS does not pursue investigations of Department of Navy-affiliated individuals who simply make statements indicating they share the beliefs or a subset of the beliefs held by domestic extremist groups unless information exists indicating their activities meet this threshold. In investigations where it is determined crimes are not evident, information is passed to appropriate commands for administrative actions deemed appropriate by the commands involved.

The predication for domestic terrorism investigations typically comes from command complaints; other investigative agency referrals; or tips. For example, NCIS maintains formal information sharing agreements with the FBI on terrorism matters. These same well-established channels serve as the primary method of information sharing on domestic terrorism matters involving active duty service members or current Department of Navy employees. NCIS is currently conducting multiple Domestic Terrorism investigations, all involving racially motivated extremism, on or affecting personnel under the purview of the Department of the Navy.

**Christopher J. McMahon**  
**Executive Assistant Director National Security Directorate**  
**Naval Criminal Investigative Service**

Special Agent (SA) Christopher J. McMahon is the Executive Assistant Director, National Security Directorate (NSD), Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). He provides leadership, strategic direction, and management for global counterterrorism and counterintelligence investigations and operations, including espionage, terrorism, compromise, technology transfer, cyber operations, threats to research, development, and acquisition programs; force protection activities, and insider threat programs.

SA McMahon served previously as the Special Agent- in-Charge (SAC) for the NCIS Office of Special Projects (OSP) (2018-2019), leading espionage investigations, surveillance operations, counterintelligence operations, and the Virtual Operations Center; Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) with NSD (2017-2018), overseeing NCIS counterintelligence operational programs; and the Department of the Navy (DON) Counterintelligence Coordinating Authority (2017-2018), leading collaborative opportunities within the DON counterintelligence enterprise.

His additional leadership positions include serving as DAD with the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, Operations Coordination Directorate (2016-2017), where he coordinated whole-of-government offensive counterintelligence operational activities; Assistant SAC of Counterintelligence Operations with OSP (2014-2016); Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) of Counterintelligence Operations with OSP (2013-2014); SSA for the OSP Special Surveillance Team (2013-2014); and SSA for Counterintelligence Investigations and Operations at the NCIS Hawaii Field Office (2012-2013). He is experienced in all NCIS mission areas, having served in multiple domestic and overseas field offices (2002-2012), including his deployment to Iraq with the Coalition Provisional Authority, and a task force position with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SA McMahon began his career in 1997 as a U.S. Navy Intelligence Officer, initially serving as the Intelligence Officer for Sea Control Squadron Two Two, deploying to the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Fox and in the Mediterranean in support of Kosovo. During his second tour, he supported the NCIS Far East Field Office in Yokosuka, Japan as an active duty Special Agent.

SA McMahon earned a Bachelor of Arts in Administration of Justice from Southern Illinois University; and both a Master of Arts in Managerial Economics and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Oklahoma.

SEP 2019

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**

**PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY  
PERSONNEL**

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENT OF**

**SPECIAL AGENT ROBERT S. GRABOSKY  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, LAW ENFORCEMENT  
STRATEGIC PROGRAMS AND REQUIREMENTS  
HQ AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS**

**SUBJECT: WHITE SUPREMACISTS IN THE MILITARY: HOW  
DO THE SERVICES IDENTIFY A PROBLEM AND CHANGE  
BEHAVIOR BEFORE THIS BECOMES A PERVASIVE ISSUE**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Pertaining to the topic of possible white supremacists within the ranks of the military, the Department of the Air Force and OSI are very concerned with early identification and timely resolution of matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces. In fact, the Department of the Air Force has a written punitive policy pertaining specifically to participation in extremist activities. The policy specifically states military personnel must reject active participation in criminal gangs and other organizations that, among other things, advocate supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes. Military members who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action under Article 92 (Failure to Obey a Lawful Order) of the UCMJ, in addition to any other implicated articles of the UCMJ the member may have violated, such as Assault or Communicating a Threat.

Air Force policy defines active participation as, but not limited to, fundraising for or donating money to the organizations, demonstrating or rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, or leading members, distributing material including posting on-line, knowingly wearing gang colors or clothing, having tattoos or body markings associated to such organizations, and otherwise engaging in activities in furtherance of the objective of such organizations that are detrimental to good order, discipline, or mission accomplishment or are incompatible with military service. It is important to note that Air Force policy dictates mere membership in the organizations is not prohibited. OSI has investigative responsibility to investigate these matters where military members who are subject to the UCMJ are suspected of active participation in extremist/supremacist groups prohibited by Air Force Instruction(s).

Since 30 September 2019, OSI received about nine reported incidents involving possible supremacy activity on the part of Air Force members. These incidents came to our attention in

various ways; two were JTTF referrals, two resulted from dormitory inspections, two were witness call-ins, one was a tip-line submission, one was a supervisor referral, and one was the result of OSI's Insider Threat initiatives. Out of the nine reports, OSI opened eight investigations and referred one incident to Air Force Security Forces for investigation. Out of the eight OSI investigations, only one involved active participation by the member, one incident was disproven, and the remaining six involved inappropriate or racially insensitive verbal comments or on-line postings. For the one active participation incident, the accused's command administered administrative action and issued a Letter of Reprimand (LOR) and an administrative reduction in rank from E-7 to E-6. As an impartial and independent investigative agency, OSI does not make recommendations on potential punitive or administrative action.

It is also important to note, OSI conducted 2,500 criminal investigations in CY19, which included 1,363 sexual assault, 577 narcotics, 192 death, and 368 crimes against person, society, or property investigations. Most of these criminal investigations involved some form of data exploitation, such as extraction of information from cellular smartphones and other personal computer devices or reviews of social media applications. Our data exploitation activities over the past year of thousands of devices and social medial accounts have not resulted in identifying additional extremist activity within our Air and Space Forces. Even though the amount of extremist incidents for the Department of the Air Force remains small, OSI and its criminal investigative agents remain vigilant to identify and quickly resolve matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces.

OSI thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide insight into some of the exceptional work our agents do every day to protect Department of the Air Force personnel and

resources, and we look forward to provide additional information as needed during future Committee hearings.

**Robert S. Grabosky**  
**Deputy Director, Law Enforcement Strategic Programs and Requirements**  
**Headquarters, Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI)**

Special Agent Grabosky is responsible for providing strategic planning, direction, oversight and management of resources ensuring the command is properly organized, trained, and equipped to execute AFOSI's criminal investigations and specialized services programs. AFOSI is an agency with over 2,000 credentialed federal law enforcement investigators assigned to over 200 worldwide locations.

Prior to assuming his current duties, Mr Grabosky was the Criminal Director of Operations, AFOSI Region 5, Ramstein Air Base, Germany where he was responsible for directing criminal and fraud investigations across United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and Air Forces Africa (AFAFRICA). Mr Grabosky has also served as the Chief of Criminal Investigations for AFOSI Region 2, Langley AFB, Virginia where he supervised criminal and fraud investigations across Air Combat Command (ACC) and Southwest Asia (SWA).

**EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Science, Police Administration; Bellevue University  
 Master of Science, Digital Forensics/Cyber Investigations; University of Maryland

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Dec 1997 – Mar 2000, Special Agent, AFOSI Det 310, Charleston AFB SC  
 Mar 2000 – Mar 2001, Counterintelligence Chief, AFOSI Det 613, Kunsan AB ROK  
 Apr 2001 – Dec 2003, Superintendent, AFOSI Det 322, Fairchild AFB WA  
 Jan 2003 – Jun 2003, Superintendent, H5, Jordan/FOL 16, Bashur, Iraq/FOL 23, Irbil, Iraq  
 Dec 2003 – Jul 2007, Operations Enhancement Specialist, 2 FIR, Langley AFB VA  
 Oct 2005 – Apr 2006, Superintendent, AFOSI EDet 2408, Baghdad, Iraq  
 Jul 2007 – Feb 2011, Special Projects Manager, 2 FIR, Langley AFB VA  
 Feb 2011 – Dec 2014, Region Criminal Investigations Chief, 2 FIR, Langley AFB VA  
 Dec 2014 – Jun 2018, Criminal/Fraud Director of Operations, 5 FIR, Ramstein AB, Germany  
 Jun 2018 – Present, HQ Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, Quantico, VA

Current as of: February 2020

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**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING  
THE HEARING**

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

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## RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Dr. BEIRICH. The only data I have on this front is what has been reported in the press. In my testimony, the following are active duty soldiers who were found to be connected to extremist ideas/groups:

- Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Hasson, arrested Feb. 2019. A former active-duty Marine and member of the Army Guard, Hasson was found to be plotting a mass murder of elected officials of the Democratic party and media figures.<sup>1</sup> After seizing his computer and other electronic devices, investigators found evidence that Hasson was a long-time white supremacist who held violently racist views even before his first enlistment in the military. He was sentenced in 2020 to 13 years in prison.
- In April 2019, Master Sergeant Cory Reeves was identified as a member of the white supremacist group Identity Evropa. He was only demoted one rank after an initial investigation. In December, proceedings into his activities opened with the possibility of discharge.<sup>2</sup> He remained employed by the Air Force until after this hearing was held.
- In September 2019, the FBI arrested Jarrett William Smith, a soldier stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, and charged him with providing expertise to extremists that could lead to the creation of explosives and weapons of mass destruction.<sup>3</sup> He was interacting with a member of a neo-fascist Ukrainian group, the Right Sector, and was interested in fighting in Ukraine. The FBI said Smith discussed in an online chat a plan to conduct an attack within the United States. Smith was reportedly searching for more “radicals” like himself and discussed killing members of an anti-fascist network as well as destroying cell towers or a local news station. Later he suggested a major American news network as a target of a vehicle bomb.
- In December 2019, two men, Brandon Trent East and Dalton Woodward, were kicked out of the Georgia National Guard after they were reported to be leaders of the racist pagan group, Ravensblood Kindred, part of the larger white supremacist Asatru Folk Assembly.<sup>4</sup> According to press reports, the men had attended a speaking event by white nationalist Richard Spencer in 2017, and one of them was on active duty in Afghanistan when his ties to white supremacy were disclosed.
- Also in 2019, the *Huffington Post* exposed seven members of the U.S. military actively posting on a Discord chatroom as part of the white nationalist organization Identity Evropa.<sup>5</sup> They included two Marines, two Army ROTC cadets, an Army physician, a member of the Texas National Guard and one member of the Air Force. Their names are: Stephen T. Farrea, Jason Laguardia, Jay C. Harrison, Christopher Cummins, Joseph Kane, Dannion A. Phillips and Christopher Hodgman.
- In 2018, Marine Lance Corporal Vasillios G. Pistolis, was expelled from the Marine Corps for his ties to the neo-Nazi Atomwaffen Division (AWD). He was removed after participating in the Charlottesville riots in 2017, where he was engaged in violent assaults. Pistolis later bragged about his involvement online with other members of AWD.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2017, Brandon Russell, Pistolis’s roommate, was arrested after one of their roommates, Devon Arthurs, killed two of their other roommates in a Tampa apartment. Investigators on the scene discovered a cache of weapons, detonators and volatile chemical compounds, including a cooler full of HMTD, a powerful

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/inside-u-s-military-s-battle-white-supremacy-far-right-ncna1010221>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/12/17/air-force-identity-evropa-cory-reeves/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/us/us-army-soldier-arrested-jarrett-william-smith.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/2-men-kicked-out-national-guard-over-alleged-white-supremacist-n1107591>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa\\_n\\_5c8ab70ae4b0d7f8b0f1094b](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-nationalists-military-identity-evropa_n_5c8ab70ae4b0d7f8b0f1094b)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2018/08/01/marine-with-alleged-neo-nazi-connections-booted-from-the-marine-corps/>

explosive often used by bombmakers, and ammonium nitrate, the substance used by Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City attack. Russell was also in possession of two radioactive isotopes, americium and thorium. At the time of his arrest, Russell had been serving in the 53rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion of Florida's Army National Guard.

- In 2013, John Charles Stortstrom, a mechanical engineer who worked for the Army at its Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) in Maryland, was suspended after published reports disclosed that he was among 150 white nationalists who attended a conference of the white nationalist American Renaissance, a race science outfit. American Renaissance included a photo on its website of Stortstrom with the caption, "Engineer. Republican. Racist. Military bomb maker."<sup>7</sup>
- In 2012, Nathan Wooten, a member of the Missouri National Guard, was arrested for running and supplying weapons to a neo-Nazi paramilitary training camp in Florida.<sup>8</sup>
- Also in 2012, two other soldiers, U.S. Army Sgt. Anthony Peden and Pvt. Isaac Aguigui, were arrested after murdering a former soldier and his girlfriend in an attempt to cover up their assassination plot against then-President Barack Obama.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2009, Marine Lance Corporal Kody Brittingham, stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was arrested on an armed robbery charge. A search of his barracks turned up a journal containing white supremacist material and a plan to kill Obama.<sup>10</sup>

There are additional sources of information on active duty troops that could be considered. In 2009, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported on leaked private emails of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM). The emails showed that several people who identified themselves as active military personnel contacted NSM over the prior two years to express interest in the organization, including at least one soldier who subsequently joined.<sup>11</sup> In 2008, the SPLC issued a report revealing that 46 members of the neo-Nazi web forum New Saxon had identified themselves as active-duty military personnel. It quoted a racist skinhead who wrote that he had joined the Army and specifically requested an assignment where he would be able to learn how to make an explosive device.<sup>12</sup> And in 2006, an SPLC report showed that a number of military personnel had joined racist and neo-Nazi groups such as the Fourth Reich, Aryan Nation, National Alliance, National Socialist Movement, and others.<sup>13</sup>

I would suggest that it would be helpful to look at all military reports on this issue. For example, in 2003, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division advised the FBI of six active-duty soldiers at Fort Riley, Texas, who were affiliated with the Aryan Nations. One was the neo-Nazi group's point of contact in Kansas and sought to recruit members from within the military.<sup>14</sup> There may be other such internal reports.

I also mention several other individuals who are former military. These include Timothy McVeigh, Eric Rudolph, Wade Michael Page, all of whom committed acts of domestic terrorism. There are far more examples such as these. In 2020, two members of the neo-Nazi The Base were arrested and had previous military training: Brian Mark Lemley was a cavalry scout in the Army and Patrik Jordan Mathews previously served as a combat engineer in the Canadian Army Reserve, indicating that the reach of white nationalism is a problem for foreign military services as well. According to New America, 21 military veterans were identified as having committed or attempted an act of violence as a right-wing extremist between 2001 and 2013.<sup>15</sup> [See page 10.]

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2013/07/08/after-hatewatch-story-maryland-military-engineer-suspended>

<sup>8</sup> <https://theweek.com/articles/833960/american-militarys-extremist-problem>

<sup>9</sup> <https://psmag.com/social-justice/does-the-american-military-have-a-problem-with-far-right-extremism>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/former-lejeune-marine-charged-with-threatening-obama/article\\_0c645db5-0529-53ad-aeee-e1ed3f7cf96b.html](https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/former-lejeune-marine-charged-with-threatening-obama/article_0c645db5-0529-53ad-aeee-e1ed3f7cf96b.html)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2009/09/03/leaked-neo-nazi-e-mails-show-contacts-military-personnel>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/evidence-shows-racist-skinheads-enlisting-military>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/several-high-profile-racist-extremists-serve-us-military>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2008/fbi-reports-extremists-military>

<sup>15</sup> <https://psmag.com/social-justice/does-the-american-military-have-a-problem-with-far-right-extremism>

Ms. MILLER. Training on supremacism is provided to incoming commanders and senior enlisted personnel during pre-command/senior leader courses. Military Department and DOD policy on extremism, including white supremacism are reinforced to commanders. Additionally, commanders are informed of the options within their authority, and the potential impact of extremism on the good order and discipline of their command. The training provided to commanders supplements training provided throughout their careers, as also required by DODI 1325.06, during their pre-commissioning training, throughout their professional military education, as well as other training such as Equal Opportunity and Threat Awareness and Reporting. [See page 41.]



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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

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### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. As you mentioned in your testimony, the military has faced a white supremacist threat before, and our country is currently dealing with an international terror threat that manifests through radicalized lone actors. We don't have to reinvent the wheel to deal with this threat. What lessons from these other fights are relevant here? And how should we apply them?

Dr. BEIRICH. The main lesson here is the need to tighten up regulations as additional problems are presented to the military. Each time the white supremacist threat has presented itself, the military has taken measures to keep hate groups and their members out. This started in 1985 with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and his banning of card-carrying hate group members from the Armed Forces. After Timothy McVeigh's bombing a set of more stringent regulations was again put in force. Again, in 2009, after it was disclosed that many soldiers were posting hate on social media, the regulations were tightened.

Today, the areas where changes need to be made are on screening incoming recruits and improving the enforcement techniques used to root out extremists from the military. A tattoo database is urgently needed as are mandatory examinations into hate on social media accounts run by potential recruits.

It is clear that the problem today may not be regulations banning extremists from the ranks, but rather their enforcement. During the testimony given after I testified, it was clear that members of the investigative services for the different military branches were applying different standards. In particular, the Air Force representative said "mere membership" in an extremist group did not disqualify someone from the ranks. But the current regulations do ban such membership.

My strongest suggestion is that a hard look at the investigative services be undertaken to make sure the same standards against racists in the ranks are applied across the board. There may be a need for training/retraining on this point for members of the investigative services and all of those in command. Troops should also be trained on these regulations.

Also, it may be a good time to consolidate all the regulations relating to this matter in one new set of principles. All staff could then be retrained to follow those new regulations. It does not appear the regulations are wanting, but rather their application is. But that is something that needs to be substantiated through a serious investigation of this matter. In the end, all hate group members and anyone expressing hate ideas needs to be identified. And they should have no place in the military. For more garden variety racist ideas expressed by troops, there must be intervention of some sort to show troops why such ideas are wrongheaded and hurtful to morale, troop cohesion, etc. and not compatible with military service. And, most importantly, decisions on these matters must be taken out of the hands of unit commanders. It should be mandatory that any allegations of such matters are reported up the chain of command and handled at a different level than the unit. This will allow for more coherent and standardized decisions in these matters.

Ms. SPEIER. As you mentioned in your testimony, the military has faced a white supremacist threat before, and our country is currently dealing with an international terror threat that manifests through radicalized lone actors. We don't have to reinvent the wheel to deal with this threat. What lessons from these other fights are relevant here? And how should we apply them?

Ms. BROOKS. We must move past a "zero tolerance" response to the presence of white supremacism in the military. In both the military and civilian worlds, we need to invest in programs that steer individuals away from extremism and deradicalize those who have adopted extremist beliefs or joined hate groups. We must prioritize research that builds and tests "off-ramping" programs—already successfully in use in Europe—in the United States. And we must prioritize this work in the active-duty and veteran community. In Europe, social programs—such as the Aarhus model—have been developed that provide evidence-based indications of positive models for dealing with the complexities of "off-ramping" civilians who have become radicalized. These programs are community-minded and focus on breaking down barriers and promoting healthy interactions with civil society. They prioritize counseling and build resilience to extremism that is more lasting than punitive re-

sponses. Although individuals must be held accountable for their actions and allegiances, further stigmatization and alienation of veterans hinders their recovery. For example, as numerous scientific studies and reports have underscored, some veterans feel that care and support around the issue of post-traumatic stress diagnoses paints the entire military and veteran communities as broken, struggling and in need of special care.

Extremism in the military is a complex, human problem that has been addressed time-and-again over the past four decades. It costs human lives. We must first study these complexities before we can understand them and work to diminish the presence of white supremacists in the ranks of our armed forces. The following is a list of compounding recommendations for addressing the complexities of this problem:

1. While it is imperative that the threat of extremism in the military is addressed, public officials and military commanders must understand that remedial action may trigger further radicalization and could help turn a radicalizing individual toward violent extremism. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, we believe in a multi-tiered approach centered on prevention and early intervention based on studies that highlight the individual nature of radicalization. When necessary, we recommend evidence-based deradicalization programs.

2. Experts in this field will need access to the relevant corridors of the military to design credible prevention and intervention programs that address the problem of extremism within the Armed Forces. Public health service members in the military (such as psychologists, psychiatrists, military social workers) will be able to provide critical input that ensures these programs take into consideration an awareness of military culture.

3. Establish a commission made up of experts in the fields of prevention and intervention in radicalization, deradicalization and de-escalation (“off-ramping”), and identify evidenced-based best practices and programming across all branches of the military for veterans reentering civilian society and corresponding resources available through VA services, clinics and hospitals.

4. Use the recommendations of the commission to establish a tiered process to address radicalization that begins with counseling but leads to discharge only as a final consequence. These programs must be rigorously evaluated.

5. Use the recommendations of the commission to create evidenced informed trainings intended to inoculate against radicalization at entry, throughout an individual’s military career, and reentry into civilian life. Train recruiters, officers (commissioned and noncommissioned), and investigators on best practices recommended by the commission.

6. Require an annual report from military leadership that includes an audit of all investigations and prevention measures taken regarding white supremacist activity within the ranks of the military. These reports should, to the largest degree possible, be made public so that it can inform the military’s response to this problem going forward.

Ms. SPEIER. As I relayed in my opening statement, Director Wray has indicated that the FBI has elevated the white supremacist terror threat to the same level as the international terror threat. Are the military criminal investigative organizations, or MCIOs, also treating those threats with equal urgency and aligning resources appropriately? What steps have you taken to ensure that commanders understand the gravity of this threat? Director Wray also mentioned that he’s stood up hate crime-domestic terror fusion cells, are there MCIO representatives present too?

Mr. ETHRIDGE. The Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID) greatly values the terrorism investigation expertise and leadership of the FBI. In 2019, the FBI welcomed CID to expand our partnership, traditionally centered on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force (NJTTF) and the international terrorism threat, to focus on the Racially Motivated Violent Extremist threat. CID added agent and analyst representation in the FBI’s Domestic Terrorism Operations Section, Counterterrorism Division, in addition to the Army personnel assigned to the NJTTF and the installation-level relationships maintained with regional JTTFs. The FBI partnership ensures timely notification of Army personnel suspected of crimes related to extremist activity. Additionally, the CID provides the FBI information on the training and performance history of former Army personnel suspected of criminal activity. Commanders are responsible for maintaining good order and discipline in their units. To assist, CID notifies Commanders when there are indications of extremist activity present. Over the past year, CID has increased collection efforts, informed HQDA of our observations, participated in the review and changes to Army policy, expanded our relationship with law enforcement partners and made notifications to Commanders. Additionally, CID has formulated a request to the Army Inspector General to add unit implementation of extremist activity policy (Army Regulation

600–20) as a focus area for the next inspection cycle. The Army is postured to identify extremist activity in the ranks and has both the policy and leadership tools to prevent emergence as a pervasive issue.

Ms. SPEIER. As I relayed in my opening statement, Director Wray has indicated that the FBI has elevated the white supremacist terror threat to the same level as the international terror threat. Are the military criminal investigative organizations, or MCIOs, also treating those threats with equal urgency and aligning resources appropriately? What steps have you taken to ensure that commanders understand the gravity of this threat? Director Wray also mentioned that he's stood up hate crime-domestic terror fusion cells, are there MCIO representatives present too?

Mr. McMAHON. NCIS is confronting racially motivated violent extremism (RMVE) threats with the same urgency as the FBI. Responding to an increase in NCIS cases and referrals from the FBI, NCIS established the unique case category Domestic Terrorism for investigative and operational reporting purposes. This allows NCIS to more accurately reflect the scope of the incidents and to align investigative resources against this emerging challenge. To ensure commanders understand the gravity of the RMVE threat, NCIS immediately briefs commands when there are indications of service member affiliation with RMVE groups under their command—regardless of evidence of criminal activity. Briefing programs have been updated to include information on domestic extremism. The command briefings not only educate commanders, but also serve as another opportunity to advise all service members of prohibited activities. Recognizing this problem cannot be addressed solely through criminal investigations, NCIS also convened a working group of Department of Navy commands to coordinate resources, identify existing policies, and determine areas of focus in an effort to raise the visibility of this issue as priority with commanders. NCIS maintains a physical presence at FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces within all major fleet concentration areas. This presence allows for direct NCIS visibility on domestic terrorism issues that could impact the Department of Navy. Additionally, NCIS maintains a senior level liaison officer at the National Joint Terrorism Task Force with immediate access to all relevant information and FBI Sections addressing this threat. This includes daily interaction with the FBI Domestic Terrorism Operations Section. NCIS has conducted multiple joint investigations and operations with the FBI targeting RMVE activity in the military.

Ms. SPEIER. As I relayed in my opening statement, Director Wray has indicated that the FBI has elevated the white supremacist terror threat to the same level as the international terror threat. Are the military criminal investigative organizations, or MCIOs, also treating those threats with equal urgency and aligning resources appropriately? What steps have you taken to ensure that commanders understand the gravity of this threat? Director Wray also mentioned that he's stood up hate crime-domestic terror fusion cells, are there MCIO representatives present too?

Mr. GRABOSKY. OSI is a federal law enforcement agency with responsibility for conducting criminal investigations, counterintelligence and specialized investigative activities, and integrated force protection for the United States Air and Space Forces. As such, all threats potentially impacting our forces are thoroughly investigated and taken seriously. OSI maintains a full-time presence on the local and national Joint Terrorist Task Forces (JTTFs) that monitor and provide Domestic Terrorism (DT) information to OSI HQ and field units for action. Additionally, through its own Insider Threat (InT) program, OSI monitors key data streams to provide early indicators of potential threat activity. These data streams, fused with the information provided by the Air Force InT Hub, provide information ranging from local arrest information to background data used for security clearance adjudication. This information, as well as information provided through local and federal law enforcement partnerships, are the key elements driving OSI's DT efforts. Currently, OSI does not have full-time representation at the hate-crime domestic terrorism fusion cell at FBI HQ. However, OSI is closely aligned with our FBI counterparts with 21 agents assigned to full-time JTTF locations, one agent and analyst at the National JTTF, and two liaison officers assigned to FBI HQ. OSI also has 66 special agents who are part of FBI Counterintelligence Task Forces (CITF) at 55 FBI offices around the country providing OSI access to FBI information systems. Finally, OSI agents and analysts closely work with the Domestic Terrorism Fusion Cell via the domestic terrorism operations section of the FBI counterterrorism division and are well postured to support investigations and operations responding to racially motivated violent extremist threats. OSI informs and educates commanders of all threats that may impact the force, to include threats from DT. The primary method of keeping commanders apprised of the seriousness of violent extremist threats, both domestic and foreign, is through routine threat information sharing with local com-

manders and senior Air Force leaders. OSI is a primary member of the commander's Threat Working Group that examines all source information and responds to threats to the local installation, mission, and personnel. Additionally, each OSI field operating location produces two annual reports that contain specific threat information tailored to their Area of Responsibility (AOR): a Criminal Threat Assessment (CTA) and a classified Local Threat Assessment (LTA). The LTA deals primarily with foreign terrorism and counterintelligence threats, while the CTA deals primarily with criminal threats and domestic terrorism. OSI thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide additional insight into some of the exceptional work our agents do every day to protect Department of the Air Force personnel and resources, and we look forward to provide additional information as needed.

